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The Woodworker

September 2015

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& Woodturner



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Welcome



Let's face it, we all enjoy our woodworking, and most of us will rarely pass up the chance to learn something new. But what if it's us that's doing the teaching? The two are actually very similar sides of the same coin. Anyone who has had the chance of imparting some useful knowledge to a keen and eager audience will no doubt appreciate that it's something of a privilege. Not only will you feel a warm glow of helping others along a sometimes rocky road (with the additional satisfaction of showing them your own particular way), but you will soon realize that it's a two-way street. There's plenty that comes back.

Alternative routes

I'm continually surprised at the ingenuity of the average student when it comes to interpreting even a fairly basic task, and it would be a fool who would ignore an impressive innovation, however unconventional. Let's face it: there's always more than one way to complete the same task, and as long as it's safe and gets the job done, well, that's fine by me. But it's not just a new take on an old technique that you may pick up, with no shortage of new ideas out there; it won't be long before the teacher is learning as much as the student.

Sharing around

Many are the recent times that my eyes have been opened to new designs, and there seems to be a greater spirit of generosity abroad

these days when it comes to encouragement and sharing around. One of the really good points though is one that's harder to define, but is possibly of greater long-term benefit than just acquiring a new technical wrinkle or admiring a new curve combination.

If you're lucky enough to be working with young people, then there's every chance to share in the new spirit of *joi de vivre* that currently abounds amongst this latest generation. They're full of positivity and tolerance, and we can all learn from them and maybe do our own small bit to help improve the rest of our time here.

Summer breaks

At this time of the year there may be other sun-related distractions out there, but don't forget the important part that you and every other reader plays in this ever growing woodworking family of ours. Yes, if there's any subject you'd like covered or projects you'd like to see (or even stories of woodwork past and present), just drop me a line and we'll do our utmost to accommodate you.

Lastly, don't forget about our Marketplace page. If you're having a clear-out – and most of us are long overdue on this front – this is the best (and cheapest, because it's free) form of advertising out there. And you can also be sure that your surplus stuff will be going to a good home!

Mark

You can contact Mark on mark.cass@mytimemedia.com



If you can't always find a copy of the magazine, help is at hand! Complete this form and hand it in at your local store, and they'll ensure that a copy of each issue is reserved for you. Some stores may even be able to arrange for it to be delivered to your home. Just ask!

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Friday 4th September (10am - 5pm)
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Yandles of Martock will be holding one of the largest dedicated Woodworking Shows in the UK on Friday 4th, 10am - 5pm and Saturday 5th September, 10am - 4pm - 2015

Our events attract around 6000 visitors from throughout the UK and Europe and gives Members of the Public and Professional Woodworkers a chance to see what is going on in the Woodworking World with free entry and parking.

There will be in the region of 50 manufacturers attending, including well-known names such as Record Power, Charnwood, Robert Sorby and Triton to more specialist company's such as Hot Spot UK, who specialise in Wood burners for the

workshop and Miles Craft.

See all their latest equipment and take advantage of their special offers. This coupled with a show discount on timber and shop stock makes it an opportunity not to be missed.



We are very excited about our show line-up which includes **Phil Irons, Simon Hope, Andy Rounthwaite** and **Andy Coates** demonstrating Woodturning. We also are pleased to announce that we have the author of 'Letter Carving', **Andrew J. Hibberd** demonstrating, part sponsored by GMC, who will be providing their wide variety of books to satisfy all of our Woodworking Visitors interests.

For something different, this year we have a hurdle maker attending along with a Willow demonstrator plus many more stands and demonstrations. Watch them as they show off their amazing talents and get motivation from their ideas.

This event is open to everyone, with **FREE PARKING & ENTRY**, as we feel very strongly that you shouldn't have to pay to browse and shop.

We also think that with so many visitors and exhibitors expected to attend, our Show gives a major boost to the local economy which is so important in this economic climate.



The event will be held in our historic Sawmill

The Hobby shop, after the success of the last show are again offering mini taster sessions from wet needle felting to Dorset button making. If someone in your party is not so interested in the wood working side why not book them a session by phoning **01935 822207** and asking for the Hobby shop.

Hobby demonstrations will be taking place during the day, also don't miss the chance to visit our 303 Gallery which offers a wonderful array of local Craftsmen's work.

Don't miss out on an inspirational day out, put it in your diaries now!

For further information please contact:

David Mounstephen
on **01935 822207**
or e-mail:
jane@yandles.co.uk
or check out our website on:

www.yandles.co.uk



In brief...

TEKNATOOL TEAM-UP

BriMarc has announced a partnership with New Zealand company Teknatool. For more than 25 years, Teknatool has been (and still is) the designer and manufacturer of one of the most respected woodturning brands in the world. Nova is well known for its innovation, quality and commitment to owners, and has a large following in the UK and Ireland already. Nova products will now be distributed in the UK and Ireland via BriMarc retailers.

Just one of the exciting products in the Nova range is the Comet II Midi lathe. This is one of the most popular lathes in its class in North America, and will be available here for the first time. Also in the pipeline are some exciting new Nova releases featuring the proprietary DVR smart motor which will revolutionise functionality and user experience in both woodturning and woodworking products.

www.brimarc.com



VERITAS ON TOUR

This autumn Vic Tesolin and Wally Wilson, two top demonstrators from Canadian company Veritas, will be visiting all the Axminster stores. They will be focusing on a number of Veritas tools, particularly the new range of build-your-own planes. They will also be demonstrating PM-V11 chisels, various high-quality hand tools and sharpening techniques, and will answer questions and offer advice. The dates and stores are:

- **Sept 3rd:** Axminster EX13 5NG (Vic or Wally)
- **Sept 5th:** North Shields NE29 7UJ (Wally)
- **Sept 6th:** Basingstoke RG22 6HN (Vic)
- **Sept 7th:** High Wycombe HP12 3FF (Vic)
- **Sept 9th:** Warrington WA2 8NT (Vic)
- **Sept 10th:** Sittingbourne ME9 8QP (Wally)
- **Sept 10th:** Nuneaton CV10 7RA (Vic)

Vic will also be demonstrating at Yandles, Martock (TA12 6JU) on Sept 4th and 5th, and both he and Wally will be at the European Woodworking Show at Cressing Temple Barns (CM77 8PD) on Sept 12th and 13th. For times, please go to the relevant Axminster store page at www.axminster.co.uk

BISH BASH BOSCH

Bosch has added three new products to its Professional range of cordless impact drivers, including the GDR 10.8 V-EC Professional shown here. The new additions offer a third longer runtime between charges and up to double the product lifetime when compared to impact drivers with conventional motors. The reason is the brushless EC motor, which is maintenance-free. An additional bonus is the resulting compact and lightweight design.

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www.bosch-pt.com



BOOK HARROGATE NOW

The North of England Woodworking & Power Tool show – the Harrogate show, as it's affectionately known – is the largest and longest established retail woodworking show in the country and is a terrific day out for its thousands of visitors. Once again there will be an excellent line-up of demonstrators at this year's show, with more than 40 taking part covering every discipline, including Stuart Mortimer, Andrew Hall, Michael Painter and Mark Baker.

The show takes place at the Great Yorkshire Showground from November 20th -22nd, and advance tickets go on sale from August 30th. For further information, contact the show organisers on 01474 536535 or visit the show web-site

www.skpromotions.co.uk

DON'T MISS FANGFEST

This year is the 17th annual Festival of Practical Arts held in the village of Fangfoss near York (YO41 5JH). This delightful village puts on a fantastic show once a year. The whole aim of Fangfest is to promote traditional crafts, and it's a great chance to see local makers demonstrating their skills.

The Rocking Horse Shop opens its doors and lets you see how rocking horses are made, including carving, painting and making tack. At Fangfoss Pottery they'll show you how to make a teapot and you can even have a go at



making one yourself. There will be traditional pole lathe demonstrators, and people making stained glass windows, spinning, making lace and corn dollies and much more. Over 20 local stall holders will also be demonstrating their individual crafts around the village.

For more details go to www.facebook.com/Fangfest

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www.axminster.co.uk



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Both chisels and skews can be easily sharpened on the Flexcut knife strop. As a bonus, sets come with a free tool roll to keep your tools tidy; this can be applied for direct from Flexcut while stocks last.

www.brimarc.com

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2-3 Beginners routing *

7-8 Bowls and platters

* Course held in Sittingbourne, Kent
Details as for August

Record Power Show

4-5 Yandles (see below)

01246 571020

www.recordpower.co.uk

Yandles Autumn Show

4-5 Hurst Works, Martock,
Somerset TA12 6JU

01935 822207

www.yandles.co.uk

EWS 2015

The European Woodworking Show is widely regarded as one of the most diverse and interesting in the woodworking calendar for its strong representation of green woodworking crafts, cabinet making, woodcarving, musical instrument making, chairmaking, pyrography, horse logging, Japanese joinery techniques, scrollsawing and of course, woodturning.

This is the 6th staging of the show at Cressing Temple Barns near Braintree in Essex. The emphasis is firmly focused on high-quality demonstrations backed up by respected trade stands. EWS 2015 will have over 80 exhibitors and stallholders utilising all the available space

at this historic site.

For woodturning enthusiasts there is plenty to enjoy as Joey Richardson from Lincolnshire joins fellow professional turners Mark Hancock and Nick Agar in the magnificent Barley Barn. This is Joey's first visit to the show and her colourful work is sure to attract a great deal of interest. The AWGB will be in attendance with their popular woodturning clinic, and pole lather Chris Griggs will be demonstrating in close proximity to the ever popular St. Peters Brewery wagon.

The show is on September 12th and 13th. For more details and pre-booked tickets, visit www.ews2015.com

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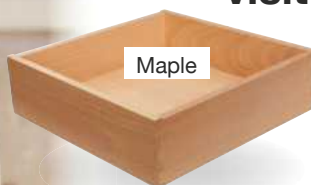


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BY KEITH SMITH

Four shades of grey

For this project I was tasked with creating a simple flat-pack wardrobe which was quick to make and easy to assemble, yet solid and durable in use. The client also wanted it to be eye-catching...

The wardrobe was to be 1.5m wide with three doors, and I thought that making two separate units – one 500mm wide and one 1000mm wide – would give the most flexibility if the owners ever moved house and wished to take the wardrobe with them. The bedroom floor was particularly uneven, so a solid base was required with easy adjustment of the height.

Door design

As for the doors, I came up with several designs, each variations on a Shaker theme, only for them to be rejected. What was wanted instead was a Mondrian-inspired design, but instead of primary colours my client wanted the coloured blocks to be in four shades of grey. This is where a computer drawing program comes in useful. I was able to produce various options for



1 I made two separate bases as I wanted the flexibility to be able to split the wardrobes in the future



2 Pocket-hole screws make a strong joint in plywood with no chance of the wood splitting



3 To ensure the frames stayed square I fixed large triangular braces across the back corners







4 Similar smaller plywood triangles do the same job on the smaller base frame



5

I glued an mdf fascia strip to the front edge of each base to take the paint finish



6 The top panels needed a mitred upstand. I cut this over-size to make machining safer...



7 ... and only trimmed it down to 50mm wide once the biscuit slots had been cut in it



8

It's important to get the mitre joint as tight as possible, so don't be afraid to use lots of cramps

9

The remaining upstand is fitted as a means of connecting the two cabinets together



them to choose from, and in the end they chose option 6! **Fig 1** shows the final design.

The cabinets and doors were to be made from 18mm mdf which I planned to finish with a water-based eggshell paint. To create the various knock-down joints, I decided to use M6 bolts and captive nuts as they are cheap, strong and durable.

Preparing the bases

I started by cutting 75mm wide strips of 18mm ply to make up the two bases, **photo 1**, and fixed them together with pocket-hole screws, **photo 2**. I could have simply screwed them together through the face as the ply frame will not be visible once the wardrobes are assembled, but I think pocket-hole screws give a better fixing as ply can easily split when it is in small sections like this.

To brace the frames I used pocket-hole screws again to fix triangular sections, also made from 18mm ply, across two corners of the large frame, **photo 3**. I made the small base in the same way, **photo 4**. I then glued a piece of 18mm mdf to the front of each base as a fascia to take the painted finish, **photo 5**.

Making up the cabinets

After cutting the various pieces out from moisture-resistant 18mm mdf, I started on the cabinet tops. The wardrobe doesn't have a cornice, but I needed somewhere to hide the knock-down fixings so I decided to set the top panels 50mm down from the top edges of the cabinets.

I started by cutting a 45° mitre along the front edge of the two panels, and also mitred matching width boards for the upstands which were left oversize so that it would be easier and safer to cut the mitres, **photo 6**. I cut biscuit slots in all the boards before cutting the upstands down to 50mm



10

A jig (and it's easy enough to make a homemade one) is vital for drilling holes for shelf mounting pegs

in width, **photo 7**. They were then glued and clamped in place whilst the glue dried, **photo 8**. Next, I fixed an upstand to the three remaining edges of both top panels using glue and biscuits, **photo 9**.

Special features

As the walls in the room were particularly uneven, I decided to set the backs of the cabinets in by 30mm to give plenty of clearance. So I set a 9mm grooving cutter in the spindle moulder and ran the four sides through to create 7mm deep slots for the backs.

The wardrobes were to have double hanging rails but, just in case they wanted to fit any shelves in the future, I used my Veritas jig to drill rows of holes in the cabinet sides to take shelf support pegs, **photo 10**.

To fix the bases to the sides I clamped them in position, aligning the back edge of the base with the front edge of the slot for the back, and drilled out for mounting bolts, **photo 11**, taking care to drill holes only 12mm deep in the mdf sides. I then screwed captive nuts into the corresponding holes in the sides, **photo 12**.

Assorted fixings

To help locate the wardrobe tops and make assembly easier, I cut three slots for Dominos in the sides of each top panel, being careful to miss the biscuits I'd fitted earlier, **photo 13**. The Dominos (biscuits would have worked for this too) will not be glued but left loose so that the cabinet can be disassembled in the future. I then clamped the tops to the sides and drilled holes for mounting bolts as I'd done earlier for the bases.

I then test assembled the wardrobes by bolting the tops (**photo 14**) and the bases (**photo 15**) to the sides. I then loose-fitted the back panels and temporarily fixed the

11

With the base frame cramped to the side panel, drill holes for the M6 bolts about 12mm deep into the side



I used countersunk captive nuts as they locate positively into the holes in the sides

12



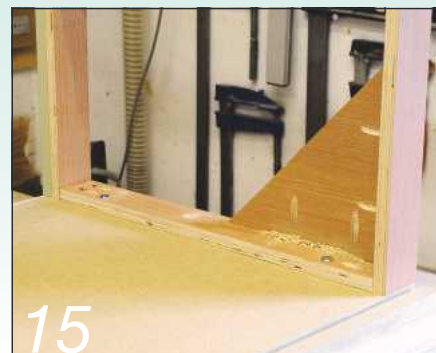
Some sort of loose location peg makes fitting the top panels a lot easier; I used Dominos

13



I should have drilled holes through the top panel upstands closer to the edge as access was tight

14



I fitted five M6 bolts to each side of the base to provide additional strength

15



16

I fixed the two cabinets together temporarily so the doors could be fitted and trimmed to size



19

I used a solid tungsten carbide cutter for the grooves in the doors. Cutting them went, for once, without a hitch

17

I fitted adjustable feet inside the front corners of each base to cater for an uneven floor



18

After priming the door edges to fill the porous mdf, I marked out the design on the door fronts



20

Painting the doors took several days, as I had to wait for each colour to dry before masking the edges of the next panel

two wardrobes together, **photo 16**. The wardrobes have loose bottoms which simply rest on the ply bases; this will allow access to the height adjusters, which I fitted to the front corners of both wardrobes, **photo 17**, should the cabinets settle over time.

Making up the doors

I cut the mdf to size for the doors and used five concealed hinges to hang each one. The doors needed a little trimming to get them to close well and not bind. Once I was happy, I marked the doors for location and orientation by drilling small holes in their top edges. I then took them off the wardrobes, removed the hinges and painted all the edges with several coats of mdf primer to get a smooth edge prior to the final painting.

Next I laid the doors out on the workbench and marked out the pattern for the panels, **photo 18**. I then used a tungsten carbide single flute router cutter to cut the shallow grooves round each coloured area. The router I have can be used with a guide rail, **photo 19**. Without this I would have had to clamp straightedges to the door, as getting these lines perfectly straight and square with a design like this is paramount.

Painting time

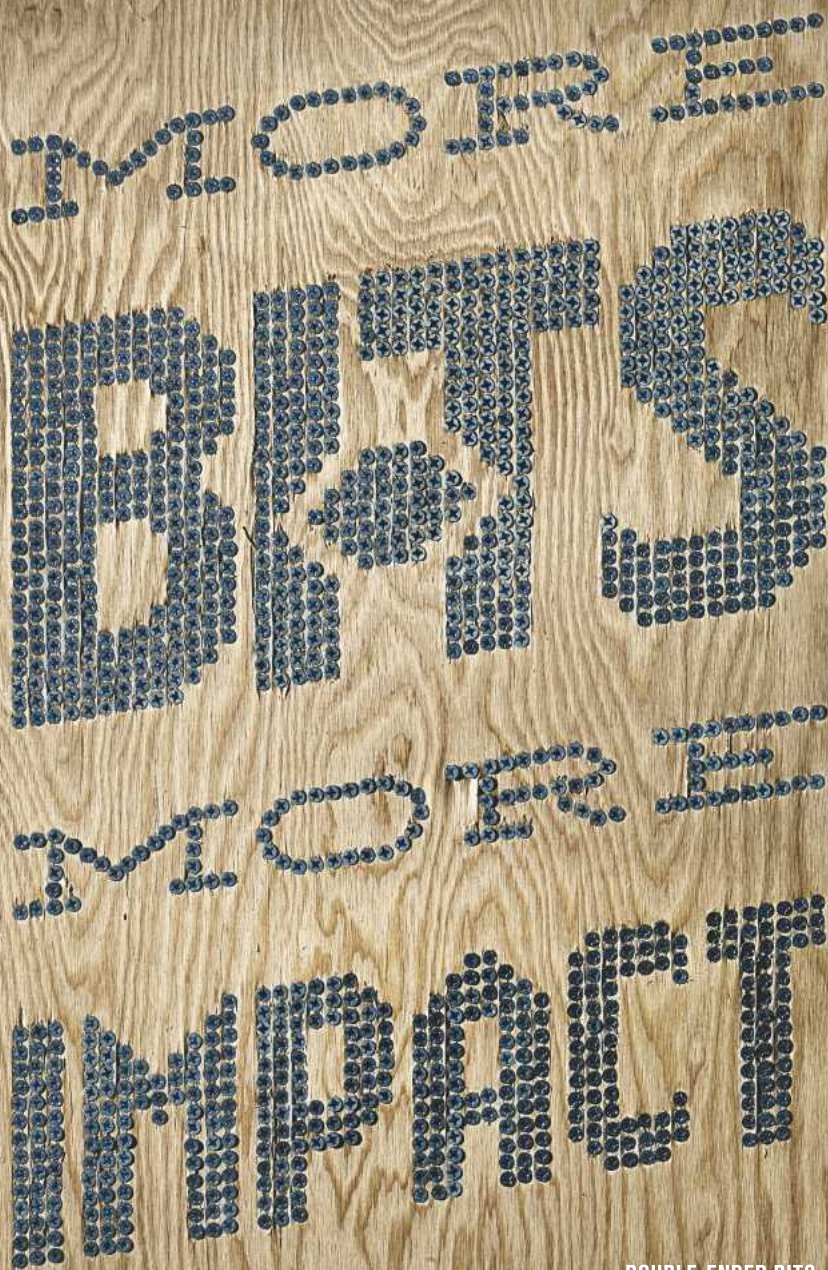
After disassembling the cabinets ready for painting, I covered all the captive nuts with masking tape to ensure that no paint got into the threads. For a job like this it's a lot easier to use a spray gun, but it is possible to use a small foam roller with water-based paints to get a good finish. I applied one coat of mdf primer, two coats of undercoat and three coats of eggshell to the cabinets. The doors took quite a bit more painting, **photo 20**, and I used several rolls of masking tape to get a clean edge to each area.

Coming together

Assembly was very straightforward. The bases were set on the floor and the sides, tops and backs were fixed in place with M6 nuts for the tops and sides and screws for the backs. The cabinets were then roughly levelled and fixed together with cabinet construction bolts.

I fitted adjustable brackets to the wall before fitting the doors. I could then check for square and level as any slight discrepancy will stop the doors from lining up properly. Once I was happy with the way the doors fitted, I fixed the cabinets securely to the wall after making final adjustments to the feet in the cabinet bases. The wardrobe floor panels were then loose-laid inside the cabinets, the rails fitted and finally the handles added to the doors. Job done!





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Reach for the sky

If you think traditional craft skills are dying out, think again. Up and down the country, groups of people are gathering together to keep them very much alive. Here's a classic example

BY GEOFF LAYCOCK

The Heritage Crafts Association is the advocacy body for heritage crafts. It works in close partnership with the government and key agencies to provide a focus for craftspeople, groups, societies and Guilds, as well as individuals who care about the loss of traditional craft skills. The HCA aims to support and promote them as a fundamental part of our living heritage.

Fortunately public interest in traditional craft skills is growing – slowly, yes, but nevertheless it *is* on the increase. Television programmes such as *Mastercrafts*, first aired in 2010, have no doubt helped raise public awareness of the decline and loss of craft skills. However, without positive action more will continue to disappear as isolated lone practitioners simply stop practising.

The ladder master

Take traditional wooden ladders, for example. Machine-made ladders are still widely available. Wooden pole ladders in particular are still being made in Newent, Gloucestershire, at a surprisingly low price of around £12 per metre length. Hand-made pole ladders are a different matter, however, and that's where Stanley Clark comes in.

Stanley Clark wrote to the HCA several years ago about ladder making, a craft in which he was involved early in his colourful life. He used to work for a company called John Ward and Sons, who were a significant maker into the 1960s. Eventually enough funding was found, first to allow two people to learn directly from Stan, and then for a further group to learn from them, with a bit of input from Stan himself.



The ladder-makers group included Stanley Clark in the front and the author on the far right

A mountain of shavings

A varied group of would-be bespoke ladder makers descended on Elvaston Castle in Derbyshire recently for almost two days of hard work in the castle courtyard. Nine people completed the ladder as a team effort, all sharing in every stage of construction. Most of the group left happy, knowing they would be able to develop their ladder-making skills with the knowledge they had gained.

You may wonder how much knowledge can be gained in under two days, but the answer is enough. It's not that complicated if you follow the rules. If you're wondering about the shavings, all the trimming and truing of the wooden poles was done by hand, and some of our planes produced lovely thick and thin shavings as desired as

we took a bark-covered Nordic pine pole and worked it to shape and size. I'm pleased to report my wooden Nurse jack plane was one of the good ones!

Preparing to start

Take one Nordic pine pole which has been split down the centre – as close to following the pith as possible – and we have the beginnings of our ladder. The split should be made so each half has an equal amount of northern and southern exposure growth. This ensures that both have the same distribution of growth ring size and hence potential strength.

To work the split poles we used a simple workbench – basically a 250 x 75mm sawn timber about 4m long, resting on carpenters' trestles, and with a couple of

very important holes bored in it. A vertical hole allows a peg to be driven up into the stile-to-be where a single bottom rung hole has been drilled.

The trestles proved to be less than stable for this purpose – a better design is needed – and we resorted to lashing a completed ladder to the trestles as extra bracing.

Stripped for action

The first job was to remove the bark from each split pole with a drawknife – a very satisfying and quick job – to reveal our rather knotty basic material. Stan was asked about our raw material and said that in his day it would have been firewood! We obviously have a future task working on sourcing suitable poles!

Our next job was measuring each stile from the bottom up to the first rung position and drilling a hole at that point. The stile was then held in place on the bench by a peg driven up into the rung hole through the hole in the bench.

With the stile secure, we set about making the flat surface truly flat, using two planes to check for wind and string to check for straightness. We then used a precision marking system – a chalk line – to set out two straight edges to the timber.

Final shaping

The stile was now repositioned to the side of the bench and secured with another peg, plus a cramp at the narrow top end. We then made the two edges straight, always planing from the thick end towards the thin one. Once we had the two sides accurate, we repositioned the stile on the top surface of the bench so we could start work on the round surface.

We first produced a straight reference plane on the top, then a number of facets to create a semicircle. I demonstrated to several delegates fairly new to woodworking the joy of a properly sorted spokeshave. It seems a small tool for such a large project, yet it's really quick for this work. I explained setting the blade on the skew so you can move from thick to thin shavings using different working positions.

When we'd finished the second stile in the same way, we all agreed that our finished ladder would be far too heavy – the result of not reducing the dimensions of the stiles adequately – but it was satisfying to know that really heavy-duty ladders were often made for farm use. They had to be capable of supporting a rugged farm labourer often carrying loads greater than a hundredweight (just over 50kg). It used to be a much harder life in the old days!

Robin Wood, the chair of the Heritage Crafts Association, demonstrates his confidence in the ladder the group made





Our bench consisted of a length of sawn timber supported on two traditional wooden trestles. It wasn't very sturdy!



A traditional draw knife was the perfect tool to use for removing the bark from the two stiles evenly and quickly



The stile was then repositioned on pegs against the face of the bench so the edges could be planed true



Three facets were planed on each side of the stile before a spokeshave was used to finish it to a round profile



The raw stile is held on the edge of the timber by a peg driven up through it into a pre-drilled rung hole



We used chalk lines – a crude but surprisingly accurate technique – to mark the straight outer edges of each stile



Here Heather and Chrissy coordinate their planing of the pole into a stile with a straight semi-circular profile



We stepped off the rung spacing with dividers on one stile and then squared the marks across to the second stile

Time for some rungs

Having produced two semi-circular stiles of the same length, width and taper, it was time to mark out the rung positions. The group consensus was that stepping off with dividers on one stile and then using a square to mark across to the second stile was the most accurate technique.

We were making a 21-rung ladder with rungs at 8¼in (210mm) centres. We were cheating somewhat as the rungs were ready-made. I'd been looking forward to exercising my right leg at a pole lathe, but we simply didn't have the time.

All the rungs are the same diameter but each one is cut slightly shorter than its predecessor, leading to the ladder tapering in a few inches towards the top. We drilled the ¾in (19mm) diameter holes with a brace and bit, then had the joy of reaming each hole to fit the rung tapers. I say joy, but the taper spoon bit we had was not very good at the job. I'll be making my own design tool for this should I start making ladders, although I've already sourced an old cooper's barrel bung auger to play with in the meantime.

Assembly time

We've all had interesting glue-ups, trying to get multiple components to fit into their respective slots and housings. Imagine trying to get 21 wobbly rungs into the second heavy stile! It was actually quite easy, as we had plenty of hands available and there was no glue involved.

Now is the time to point out that we made the tapers for the rungs from the round side of each pole, as this would be facing inwards when assembled – typical for a thatcher's ladder. A few sash cramps helped to pull the structure together ready for adjustment using a large rubber mallet. We had to get the stiles straight again because the variation in our rung holes caused some distortion.

Wooden nails

Once we were happy with the alignment of the stiles and rungs we installed a number of trennels – wooden 'tree-nails' – through the junction of each stile and rung. This was to keep the components together for the next step, rather than to provide the finished strength of the ladder.

A 6mm hole was drilled at each junction and then a 6mm square hardwood peg was hammered in. This is a very old form of fastener and is rarely used these days, but it was effective and fun to do. The excess peg length was then cut off and trimmed flush with a knife.

A little metalwork

What holds everything together are the round black iron tie rods, again spaced along the length of the ladder. These ¼in (6mm) diameter bars pass through 6mm holes drilled at a slight angle so the bar runs along the lower profile of the rung. One end was riveted over before installation and a steel washer slipped in place. After being guided through the stile holes, the unworked end was then cut to length and hammered over.

I restrained myself at this point, having done much hand-riveting in the past, and didn't get into a discussion about how much material should be left or how to form a dome rather than the pancake shapes we had. The ultimate way to finish would be using a rivet set which produces a near perfect dome, but I'll save that for my own ladders.

We didn't apply any treatments to our ladder. In former times makers would apply red lead paint to the ends of the rungs going into the stile sockets, and maybe apply a coat of varnish. Remember that wooden ladders must never be painted if used at work. This is prohibited as coatings can hide fractures and splits.

Final thoughts

What did we learn along the way? Making a ladder isn't complicated, but it's a large-scale job and needs plenty of space. Suitable timber poles might be a challenge to find easily. Remember to trim the ends of the rungs to length before fitting the iron tie-rods. Make it lighter. Well-tuned wooden planes are perfect for this work. It's OK to use a power drill.

Will I make more? Three of us intend to learn more about ladder making, and further courses will be run with the intention of everyone having something finished to take away. Watch this space.



After all holes were drilled at ¾in diameter using a brace and auger bit, it was time to create the tapers



After fitting the rungs into their tapered holes in the first stile, we were ready for the tricky job of adding the other stile



Angled holes were drilled through the stile into each rung (left), ready for a wooden trennel to be driven in and trimmed off (above)



Each tie rod is fed through its pre-drilled holes (above), and the free end is then hammered over to lock it in place (left)

LADDERS FOR THATCHERS

Thatcher's ladders can be very long, originally reaching from ground level to the house ridge when laid on the roof pitch. Nowadays a roof ladder would start from an eaves-level scaffold platform. Our ladder was only around 15 feet (4.5m) long. Having the round face of the stile on the inside makes it more comfortable to use as the thatcher kneels on the ladder. The outside straight edge can then be used as a guide when setting thatch. When a ladder is made for an individual thatcher, the rung spacing would be adjusted to allow a foot to rest on one rung and the third rung up to fit just below the knee. I found our spacing perfect for me but another learner, Adam, would have needed more like a 10in (250mm) spacing.

If you want to learn more about long straw, eaves-bottles, yealms, yolks and spars, then go to www.hlcollege.ac.uk and search for The Thatcher's Craft.



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BY IAN WILKIE



Cutting straight

It doesn't always seem to be appreciated that the scrollsaw is a very versatile machine which can be used for general woodworking as well as more specialised purposes. Here's how to get started



1

The EX-16 is the smallest of the three Excalibur scrollsaws on the market at present

2

The tailor-made steel stand provides a sturdy and adjustable work platform



Most scrollsaw manufacturers have at least one or two designs in their range in different throat sizes, so one must assume that they sell well. I originally started with a relatively inexpensive Draper machine, and persevered until I had mastered the various techniques. Later I went on to test many scrollsaws and finally purchased a Hegner 2S variable speed model for use in my own workshop.

I've never found a better scrollsaw since, so it would still top my list... but it's now very expensive. However, if you take a long-term view, the Hegner is so well engineered and robust that it will give many years of service. What's more, all the replaceable parts are always available.

Foot control

One of the reasons I particularly like the Hegner is the ability to use a foot switch with it. This leaves both hands free to control the work, and the machine comes to an immediate standstill the moment the foot is lifted. Most machines on the market

now are fitted with an NVR switch, which doesn't lend itself to foot controls. In this article I'll be using an Excalibur EX-16 scrollsaw, **photo 1**, which is half the price of the Hegner and performs very well. It's available from Axminster and costs £590.

Scrollsaw features

The EX-16 is the smallest of the three Excalibur saws, with a maximum cutting capacity of 50mm and a 405mm throat. It's shown in **photo 2** mounted on a steel stand specifically designed for this model and costing £80. The splayed and adjustable legs give a working height of 650-800mm. You can tilt the stand at an angle towards you to give a sloping work surface when seated, but I personally prefer a level one.

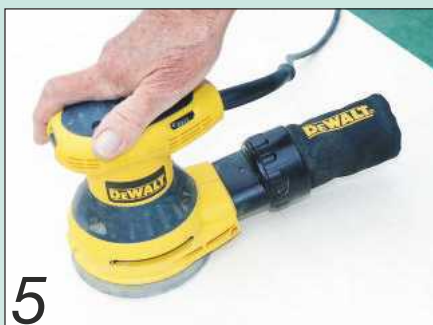
If you're new to scrollsawing, a hold-down device is useful and stops the work jumping up on the upstroke, **photo 3**. However, as you learn to combat this tendency, you'll probably find it gets in the way and decide to remove it.



3 A hold-down device is useful as it stops the work jumping up on the upstroke



4 Most scrollsaws have sufficient power to cut wood up to 50mm thick with ease



5 It's a good idea to fine-sand the surface of the material you intend to cut



6 It's best to cut just on the waste side of the marked line and sand the edge back to it



7 Bench Cookies will hold a sheet of ply firmly on the bench when marking out or sanding



8 The holes in the table allow sawdust to be sucked down if the saw is attached to an extractor

Cutting performance

Most scrollsaws will have no trouble cutting solid wood, ply or mdf up to a maximum thickness of 50mm, and they will cope with very thin veneers if sandwiched between scrap material. **Photo 4** shows a box being cut from a solid block 40mm thick.

If you're going to fret plywood for making toys or puzzles, it needs to be birch ply. This is expensive, but very little material will be wasted if you plan your design to make good use of the sheet. The plywood found in most DIY stores isn't suitable; the minimum grade required is B/BB. Grade B should have no plugs, repairs or faults; BB may have small repaired splits and pin knots on one face only.

Your local model shop may well have some suitable material in stock, but failing this there are three reliable sources which

I've used at one time or another. See the panel (below right) for details.

The right blades

Contrary to what you may think, scrollsaw blades don't break that easily. You're much more likely to discard them because they've become blunt rather than broken. I always use precision-ground blades (PGT) because they're machined accurately, and although they cost more they last at least three times longer. I find sizes 5, 7 and 9 meet my requirements. These blades produce a clean, crisp cut with no whiskers. Cheap poor-quality blades will just lead to frustration!

Cutting straight

A scrollsaw doesn't have a fence, and therefore many people believe they can't cut a straight line accurately because the

saw blade is too thin and flexible. However, with practice cutting straight isn't a problem. In this first article I'll give you a few hints and tips, and also present a simple project which involves this technique.

Before starting work, it's well worth taking the trouble to sand the material you're going to cut, **photo 5**. A really smooth surface will help to stop the blade wandering off course.

Holding tight

Because the blades are very thin and narrow, there's a tendency for them to flex by up to 6° to one side or other and you need to allow for this particularly when cutting a straight line. Hold the work down firmly on the table with both hands and move the wood gently into the blade. Decide before you start whether you're going to cut on the line or to one side or the other, but be consistent. Don't push the blade to the right or left; this could cause it to bend and break. If the blade does start to wander off to one side, don't panic! Ease off the pressure and steer the wood gently back on line.

Sanding edges

I find it best to cut on the outside of the line wherever possible so the cut edge can be sanded back to the line or to the exact fit required, **photo 6**. Permagrit sanders, **photo 7**, are useful to true up straight edges, and the round Bench Cookies shown alongside them will hold a sheet of ply firmly on the bench when marking out or sanding. By the way, you can revive a clogged-up Permagrit sander by brushing Nitromors paint stripper over the surface. After 30 minutes, scrub the surface in soapy water and the sander will be good as new!

You'll notice that the Excalibur doesn't have a conventional throat plate, **photo 8**. The holes drilled in the table allow the sawdust to be sucked down if the scrollsaw is attached to an extractor. Scrollsawing is a relatively quiet operation, but running an extractor creates noise so I usually prefer to do my vacuuming after I've finished work.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Excalibur scrollsaws

- Axminster
- 03332 406406
- www.axminster.co.uk

Plywood

- www.hobbycraft.co.uk (you may have a store near you)
- www.alwaysshobbies.com (mail order)
- www.hobbyuk.com (mail order)

Scrollsaw blades

- www.shesto.co.uk

MAKING THE BEACH CAFÉ

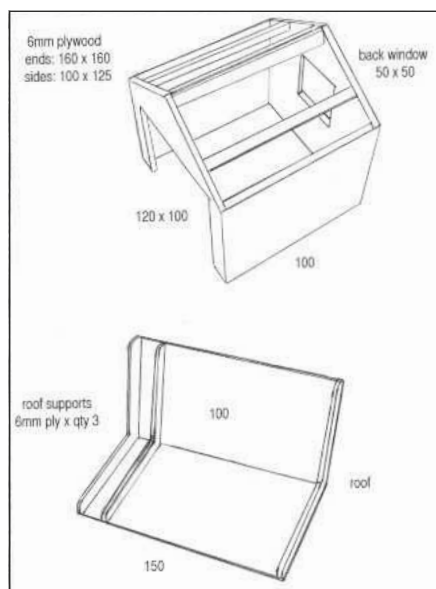


Fig 1

This is an example of a toy made entirely with the aid of the scrollsaw. All the cutting, with the exception of the bargeboards, is straight. I made the café, based on a beach hut design, to suit proprietary toy figures 75mm in height. The scale isn't critical so long as the characters can get comfortably through the door. I used 6mm birch plywood and some offcuts of stripwood. **Fig 1** gives the essential dimensions for the walls and roof, and **fig 2** the sizes for the doors and floor.

Overhead routing

The tongued and grooved cladding is simulated by routing V-grooves at intervals in the building's walls. I do this with a Proxxon overhead routing system, **photo 1**, but it could equally be done with a small plunge router. The same set-up is used to cut rebates along the edges of the four pieces which form the shell of the building, **photo 2**.



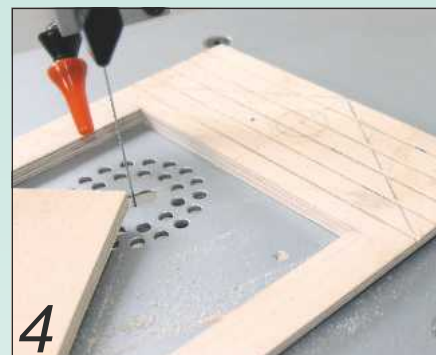
1 I used a small overhead router to simulate the tongued-and-grooved wall cladding



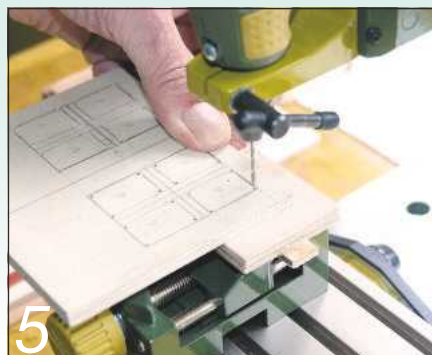
2 The same set-up is used to cut rebates along the edges of the walls



3 When cutting out door openings, first drill a small hole inside each internal corner



4 Cut along one side to the first hole. Rotate the work through 90° and repeat the cut twice



5 When cutting window openings, drill a small hole at each corner of the aperture



6 I prefer to thread the blade up through a pre-drilled hole before reattaching it



7 Cut and fit the three roof supporting bars and cramp up the building's shell



8 Glue strips along the back and side edges of the floor to match the inside dimensions of the shell



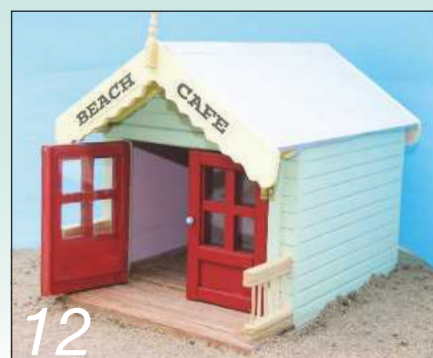
9 Glue the shell to the base, check that it sits squarely and set it aside to dry



10 Fret out two sets of bargeboards, paint them and stick them to the ends of the roof

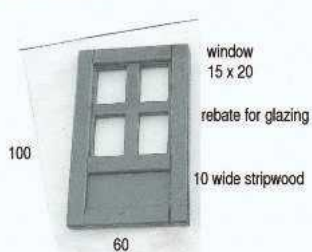


11 Paint and hang the doors and attach the completed roof to its support bars



12 You can add little rails to the sides of the verandah as a final decorative touch

DRAWING 2: FRONT DOORS X 2



DRAWING 3: FLOOR/VERANDAH



Fig 2

Cutting apertures

When cutting out door openings, first drill a small hole inside each internal corner, **photo 3**. Then cut along one side until the first hole is reached. Rotate the work through 90° and repeat the cut... twice, **photo 4**. In this way you'll always get clean corners.

Work in a good light and position the blower so the cutting line is free from dust. One shortcoming of the Excalibur is how feeble the blower is, even when the end of the tube is placed as close as is shown in the two photos. This can be annoying, because it's important for the dust not to obstruct the line you're trying to follow.

When cutting window openings, drill a small hole at each corner of the aperture. Then insert the blade through one hole, and cut from corner to corner as before, **photo 5**. It's important that these holes are drilled at 90° to the wood surface, so I favour using a bench drill rather than a freehand one.

Top or bottom

I prefer to release the blade from the top cramp rather than from the bottom one when I wish to thread the blade through a hole in the workpiece, but this is a matter of choice. No special key is required; just a turn of the knob releases the blade. It's then threaded up through the drilled hole in the area to be cut out and is re-inserted in the

top cramp, **photo 6**. The tensioning lever is then moved backwards and cutting can re-commence.

Assembling the café

Chamfer the edges of the side walls so the roof will fit flush. Cut and fit the three roof supporting bars and then glue and cramp up the shell, **photo 7**.

Cut the floor and verandah base to size and glue three strips along the back and side edges to match the inside dimensions of the shell as shown in **photo 8**. The planks for the floorboards are cut from thin stripwood. Glue the shell to the base, **photo 9**.

Next, cut the two pieces for the roof; note that there's an overhang at the front. Support the underside of the roof with thin ply strips as shown in **fig 1**, and notch the inner rafter so that it sits on the shell neatly. Fret out two bargeboards and add a little finial. It is easier to paint some of these pieces first before finally gluing them in position, **photo 10**; acrylic paints are ideal.

Finish off the café by hanging the doors and putting on the roof, **photo 11**. I also glazed the doors and window, and added little rails to the sides of the verandah as a final decorative touch, **photo 12**.

Next month I'll show you the right techniques to use for cutting out jigsaw puzzles on the scrollsaw.

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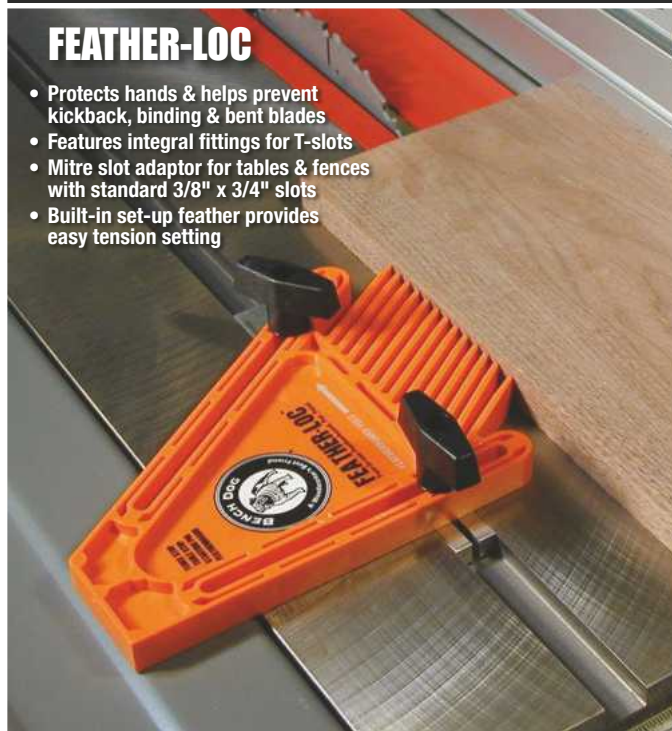
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Chips from the chisel

Way back in the early days of *The Woodworker*, the editor started a column called 'Chips from the Chisel'. It featured reminiscences from readers about their lives and work, and ran for several decades until it expired sometime in the 1970s. Now it's back, and John Gainey of Cardiff starts the ball rolling. Here's his story...

I stood at the top of the stairs and looked down the long, dark workshop, seeing benches, men's faces and white aprons. It was 1955. I was 15 years of age, nervous and shy, and had just left school.

One of the men in a white apron beckoned me over to him. I walked to his bench, and so began my career as an apprentice carpenter and joiner. I got the job because my mother was an office cleaner for the Great Western Railway at the pierhead buildings Cardiff (now a museum). This entitled her to two free train tickets a year, and the opportunity for any member of her family to work at a trade for the GWR.

Setting the scene

The workshop was on the first floor, above the sawmill. It contained nine workbenches, each double-sided and approximately 12 feet long, with wooden vices at each end.

There was a drawer at each side for the tools in use that day, and the tops of the benches were chipped and gnarled from years of use. Underneath was a shelf containing woods of every kind and offcuts from different jobs.

All sorts of work

The men were either carpenters and joiners – the only ones qualified to wear the white apron as a badge of their trade – or simple carpenters. These latter were unqualified



Few pictures exist of any of our earlier working lives, but here's one of John Gainey from the 1960s. Sideburns were essential then...

and so did the rough work on the docks, such as lock gates, pontoons and the coal tips. They wore the blue overalls of the Great Western Railway workforce.

Workshop essentials

Billy-cans and enamel mugs were stored in a small cupboard which hung on the wall by each bench and contained tea, sugar and a tin of condensed milk.

A small mess room for eating meals was located at the end of the shop, but it was rarely used as the men preferred to eat at their benches during the dinner hour and then stretch out on top for a snooze. Woe betide the apprentice who made a noise during that sacred time!

Personal possessions

At each bench was a large black wooden toolbox with the owner's initials painted in white on the front. No one would dare to go into another's box without permission; that was an unspeakable crime.

Each man's toolbox contained his saws – the rip, panel, dovetail and coping saw. Alongside these were his chisels, hammers, a mallet, various screwdrivers, moulding planes, squares and gauges. There was also a wheel brace and a set of twist drills,

and a Stanley ratchet brace with its matching bits protected in a bit roll so the wings stayed clean and sharp.

Sharpen your own

Saws were sharpened by the craftsman himself on the sawhorse. The worst thing that could happen to a saw was hitting a nail or a screw buried in the timber being worked (a lot of wood was recycled in those days). When that happened, a groan would go up from all who heard it; everyone felt as though it was happening to their own saw. Then the saw files and a saw set were brought into action.

First a file went along the length of the blade to level up the teeth. Then one side was sharpened, followed by the other, taking care to avoid what they called ducks and drakes – large and small or uneven teeth.

Prized possessions

From rip to crosscut and panel to dovetail, the same loving care was taken with each joiner's personal saws. After sharpening, they were oiled and stored in the toolbox on buttons attached to the underside of the lid.

The most desired saws of all were made by Henry Disston of Philadelphia, USA. The combination of Philadelphia steel and the expertise of Disston (who served his time in England with Spear & Jackson of Sheffield) made these the most prized of all saws.

Planes and chisels

Lastly, each tool chest contained wooden jack and smoothing planes, all stamped with the craftsman's name. There were also moulding planes of various shapes and sizes; there were no routers back then.

Slipstones for sharpening gouges were stored wrapped in oily rags, while oilstones rough and smooth were each encased in a mortised-out wooden box and lid and lovingly protected.

Chisels were meticulously cleaned and their edges protected before they were put away in shallow drawers. They were always struck with a mallet, never with a hammer. That was considered to be the wanton action of a butcher, and a grievous sin in the joiner's code of conduct.

to be continued...

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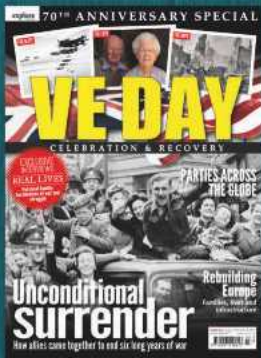


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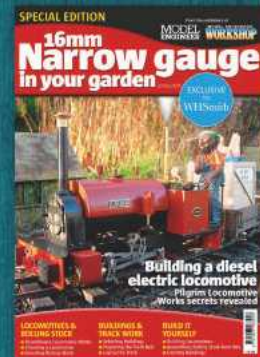


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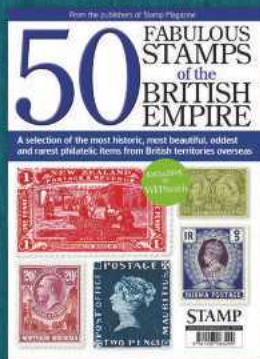
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BY ALAN HOLTHAM

Tidy is as tidy does!

I'm not particularly obsessive about the state of my workshop, but I do go out of my way to ensure that it's kept tidy at all times. This isn't just for aesthetic reasons, and not even primarily on the grounds of safety. It's more about efficiency and saving time

Like many woodworkers, my workshop time is often limited and therefore very precious, so I become extremely frustrated if I have to waste much of it needlessly searching for a particular tool.

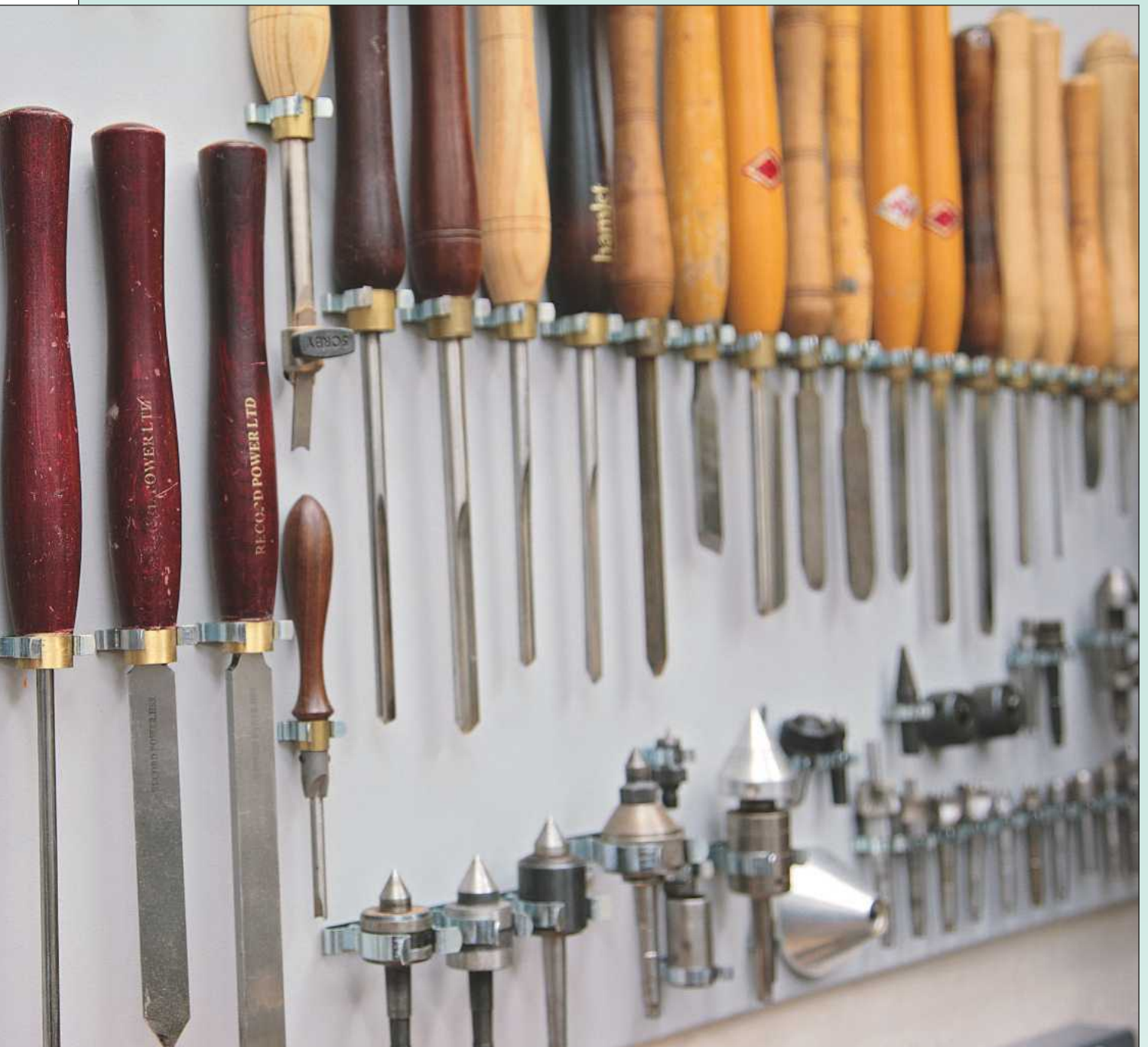
Unfortunately, for any tidiness strategy to work you must be extremely disciplined – not a natural attribute of mine – and make sure everything is religiously put away after use. This habit is helped considerably if there is a dedicated home for everything, so you know exactly where to look for it each time it's needed.

If your workbench is a disorganized mass of tools and gadgets, with sharp edges banging against all sorts of things they shouldn't be banging against, then consider making yourself some wall-mounted tool boards for an instant transformation and the re-establishment of usable working space as well.

Making a tool board

Tool boards are very simple to make, requiring the minimum of materials and expense, and in their simplest form they can be just a plain board screwed to the wall. However, as they're to be a permanent and visible fixture in the workshop, I prefer to spend a little extra time making them a bit more pleasing to the eye, though this is not strictly necessary.





Mdf is the ideal material to use; it's readily available in large sheets and relatively cheap. An 8 x 4ft sheet of 18mm board will cost you about £20, and provides enough for several useful sized boards. Cut it up using a power saw, taking care to support both the board and the offcut adequately as it is quite heavy stuff and can easily break before you've finished the cut



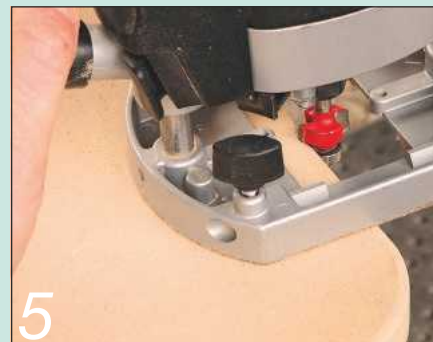
Use a template to mark a radius on each corner. Tins make ideal templates here and you can play around with different sizes to get a pleasing curve. Alternatively, the Trend dedicated routing template is a very useful piece of kit for this job



3 Use a jigsaw to remove the corner, cutting just on the waste side of the line. The radius can then be sanded back to the line, but for perfection try a bearing-guided trimmer cutter in the router to tidy it up professionally



4 This is used in conjunction with the routing template, which is temporarily clamped back in position on the board. Running the router round the template with the bearing in contact with it produces a perfectly smooth radius



5 Now use a small roundover cutter to radius all around the front edge of the board. This will give an edge that resists chipping and takes a paint finish far better than a sharp arris.



6 To keep the workshop bright, I prefer to paint the boards in a light grey colour rather than leaving them with their natural (and rather drab) buff finish. Standard emulsion paint will do this job very well (dilute the first coat slightly to act as a primer). Giving it a final coat of clear varnish greatly increases the wipeability of the finished surface. Emulsion paint on its own soon becomes dirty with regular use of the board



7 You then have to fix the tools to the board in some way, and one of the most useful methods is using spring (Terry) clips which are available in a huge range of sizes. They just screw into the mdf, but do bore a small pilot hole for each screw first to minimise the risk of the screw pulling out as a tool is unclipped



8 For the sake of neatness, take care to get the tools lined up horizontally and evenly spaced along the rows, by carefully measuring out the distances between clips



9 With all the clips in place, what was an untidy heap of tools cluttering up your bench becomes a display where each one is immediately visible and readily to hand



10 For oddly shaped items, use a combination of nails and clips for hanging. Take your time to work out a logical arrangement that makes them easy to access and replace.

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Precisa 6.0 P-1	Professional	Inc 2m STC + TLE (ditto)	4.0 / 6.5	110 mm x 1400 mm	£2416.67	£2900.00
Precisa 6.0 P-2	Professional	Inc 2m STC + TWE + TLE (ditto)	4.0 / 6.5	110 mm x 1400 mm	£2590.00	£3108.00
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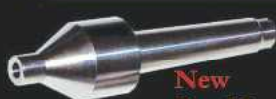
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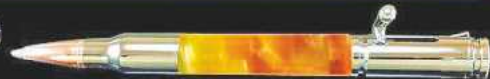
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In the first of an ongoing series about watery woodwork, we bring you an interesting article concerning that popular but often misunderstood method of forming curves in wood, namely steam bending



Shipshape again

BY RICHARD JOHNSTONE-BRYDON

In its natural state it is virtually impossible to bend wood more than a few degrees without cracking or breaking it. However, it can be transformed momentarily into a very pliable material by steaming it, thereby enabling it to be used for a number of purposes –including, in the case of this unusual yacht restoration, forming rubbing strakes, hull planking and distinctive looking tillers to name but a few.

The problem

In this instance, several pieces of oak had to be steamed so they could be bent into shape to replace the cracked timbers of the classic Broads yacht *Force Four*. The work was part of the extensive restoration carried out by Jonathan Greenway and Dean Baldry of the Loddon-based Greenway Marine. As can be clearly seen in **photo 1**, the yacht's original timbers had started to crack as her hull shape deteriorated.



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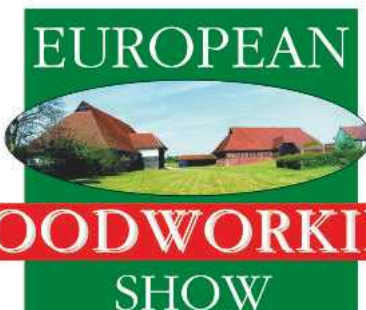
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The replacement timbers

The oak timbers used as replacements should be green – unseasoned – with as straight a grain as possible. The visibility of the timbers will dictate the finish given to the upper surface. For larger boats like *Force Four* where the timbers will eventually be hidden from view, the edges can simply be chamfered. On smaller craft like wooden dinghies or half-deckers, the timbers will be clearly visible so the upper surface would be radiused to leave an elegant curved surface on view.

The equipment

The technology required to steam timbers is incredibly low-tech, **photo 2**. In this instance the timbers to be bent are placed inside a lagged length of cast iron drainpipe. The water inside the blue can is brought to the boil using a Calor gas stove underneath. As the steam rises up inside the tin, it escapes into the drainpipe and steams the contents. Cloth packing blocks the outlet end of the pipe to keep the heat in.

Each piece of wood was steamed for about 90 minutes, and it took the duo another 30 minutes to secure each one in position. To cater for these timings and maintain the momentum of the work, three pieces of wood were kept in the steamer at all times. As one piece was removed from the top of the pile, **photo 3**, another was placed at the bottom before the cloth was wrapped around the open end of the pipe again.

The flow of steam has to be constantly maintained, so it's important to regularly check the water level in the can, which should be kept about a third full. When it's time to top up the level, more boiling water is added straight from the kettle.

Every second counts

Speed is of the essence, from the moment the end of the tube is uncovered to the point at which the steamed timber is clamped in position. The time taken by Dean to extract the timber from the tube and pass it Jonathan inside the hull is a key factor in the ultimate success of the job, **photo 4**. The timber will remain at the optimum temperature for bending for just a few precious moments.

Dean passes the steamed timber to Jonathan, **photo 5**. Thick gloves must be worn; it's very hot! Jonathan swiftly bends it into shape. He holds the inboard end of the wood in place with one foot and carefully bends the timber to shape. As soon as he's done so, Dean secures a clamp at the turn of the bilge to hold the timber in position, **photo 6**.



1 The yacht's original timbers had started to crack as her hull shape deteriorated



2 The technology required to steam timbers is incredibly simple and low-tech



3 The steamed timber is removed from the tube; thick gloves are essential here!



4 Dean passes the steamed timber to Jonathan, who swiftly bends it into shape



5 He holds the inboard end of the wood in place with one foot as he bends it to shape



6 A clamp is fitted at the turn of the bilge to hold the timber securely in place



7 Dean countersinks the hole for the nail head once Jonathan has drilled the hole from inside



8 The nail holes are staggered to avoid any risk of splitting the new timber



9 Dean then uses a centre punch to drive the nail fully into the countersunk hole



10 Jonathan uses a modified club hammer as a dolly because it won't mark the warm wood



11 A special home-made punch helps to drive the copper rove onto the nail



12 A pair of end cutters is then used to cut the nail just above the rove



13 The rounded pein of the hammer is the ideal shape for clenching the nail over the rove



14 Dean ensures the nail remains in position by placing a dolly against its head



15 This particular dolly consists of a metal pole with a heavy weight on the end



16 The last of the steamed timbers have now been fixed securely in place

Once the lower cramp is in place, the upper part of the timber is secured to the sheer strake by another cramp. Jonathan then taps the top of the timber with a hammer (as shown in the main photo on page 41) to bend it the final few millimetres and ensure it follows the shape of the planking exactly.

Securing the timber

It's now time for some fixings. Dean countersinks the hole for the head of the nail once Jonathan has drilled the hole from the inside of the hull, **photo 7**. The nail holes are staggered to avoid any risk of splitting the timber, **photo 8**. Dean then uses a centre punch to drive the nail fully into the countersunk hole, **photo 9**. The resulting small indentation will be filled before painting.

The term 'dolly' is applied to any heavy weight used to help secure the timber in place. In this instance, Jonathan uses a club hammer as a dolly, **photo 10**, because its smooth surface won't mark the warm wood. While Dean drives the nail through from the other side, Jonathan uses the dolly to counter the vibration caused by the repeated hammering.

A riveting time

The copper rivets used to secure the steamed timber to each plank consist of a copper nail and a special copper washer called a rove. Dean hammers the nail in until it's flush with the hull planking. The rove is placed on top of the nail, and Jonathan uses a home-made punch to drive the rove onto the nail, **photo 11**. A pair of end cutters is then used to cut the nail just above the rove, **photo 12**.

To complete the securing process, the rounded pein of the hammer is used to clench the nail over the rove, **photo 13**. The heavier flat end of the hammer is subsequently used to smooth it off to leave a tidy finish. While Jonathan hammers the rove in place inside the boat, Dean ensures the nail remains tightly in position by placing a dolly against the nail head, **photo 14**. This particular dolly consists of a metal pole with a heavy weight on the end, **photo 15**.

The last of the steamed timbers are now fixed securely in place, **photo 16**, ready for *Force Four* to enjoy another eight decades of cruising the Broads.

FURTHER INFORMATION

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BY ANDY STANDING

Hidden strength

The most familiar type of dovetail joint is the lapped dovetail. It's used when you want to hide the joint on one side but make it visible on the other

It's most common use is in drawer construction, where mechanical strength is needed to fix the sides to the front, but you don't want the joint to show when the drawer is closed. It's a demanding joint to cut, similar to the through dovetail, but the added complication of the lap makes it more difficult to clear the waste from the pin members. For an elegant appearance, try to keep the pins as narrow as possible.

Before starting to make the joint, prepare your timber carefully to ensure that the ends are square and the thickness uniform. You'll need the following tools: a marking gauge, a sliding bevel or dovetail marking template, a dovetail or other fine-bladed tenon saw, a coping saw, a marking knife, a try square, bevel-edged chisels and a soft hammer or a wooden mallet.



1 Mark the thickness of the lap on the end of the pin member. Don't make it too thin as otherwise it can break out. Aim for a minimum of 4mm. Run the gauge along the inside face of the workpiece



2 Mark the face of the tail member, using the same setting on the marking gauge and running it against the end of the workpiece. You can now mark out the tails



3 Use a dovetail template, or a sliding bevel set to a slope of 1:8 for hardwood or 1:6 for softwood. Mark a line 4-6mm from each edge; then divide the space between the lines by the number of tails required. Mark them down to the gauged line



4 Fix the tail member vertically in a vice and use a fine-bladed saw to cut out the tails. Keep on the waste side of the lines and be careful not to overshoot the gauged line



5 Use a coping saw to remove the remaining waste from between the tails. Cut just above the gauged line, then trim carefully down to it with a narrow chisel



6 Use the tails to mark out the pin member. Be careful to align the boards exactly, with the tail member up against the lap. Use a scalpel or a scribe to make the marks



7 Use your marking gauge to mark the thickness of the tail member on the pin member. Use a try square to carry the ends of the tail lines down to the gauged line



8 Fix the pin member in a vice and cut carefully down the edges of the tails. Hold the saw at an angle so you can cut down to the gauged line and up to the lap



9 Remove the rest of the waste with a razor-sharp chisel, taking the finest cuts. Cut across the grain along the gauged line to start with, then pare out the waste in stages



10 Lever the waste out along the grain, taking shallow cuts as you work your way down. Once the pins are finished, gently tap them halfway into the sockets to check the fit, but don't assemble the joint fully



11 Tap the joint apart carefully and make any necessary adjustments with your chisel. Then apply a little glue and assemble the joint fully by tapping the pin member gently into place



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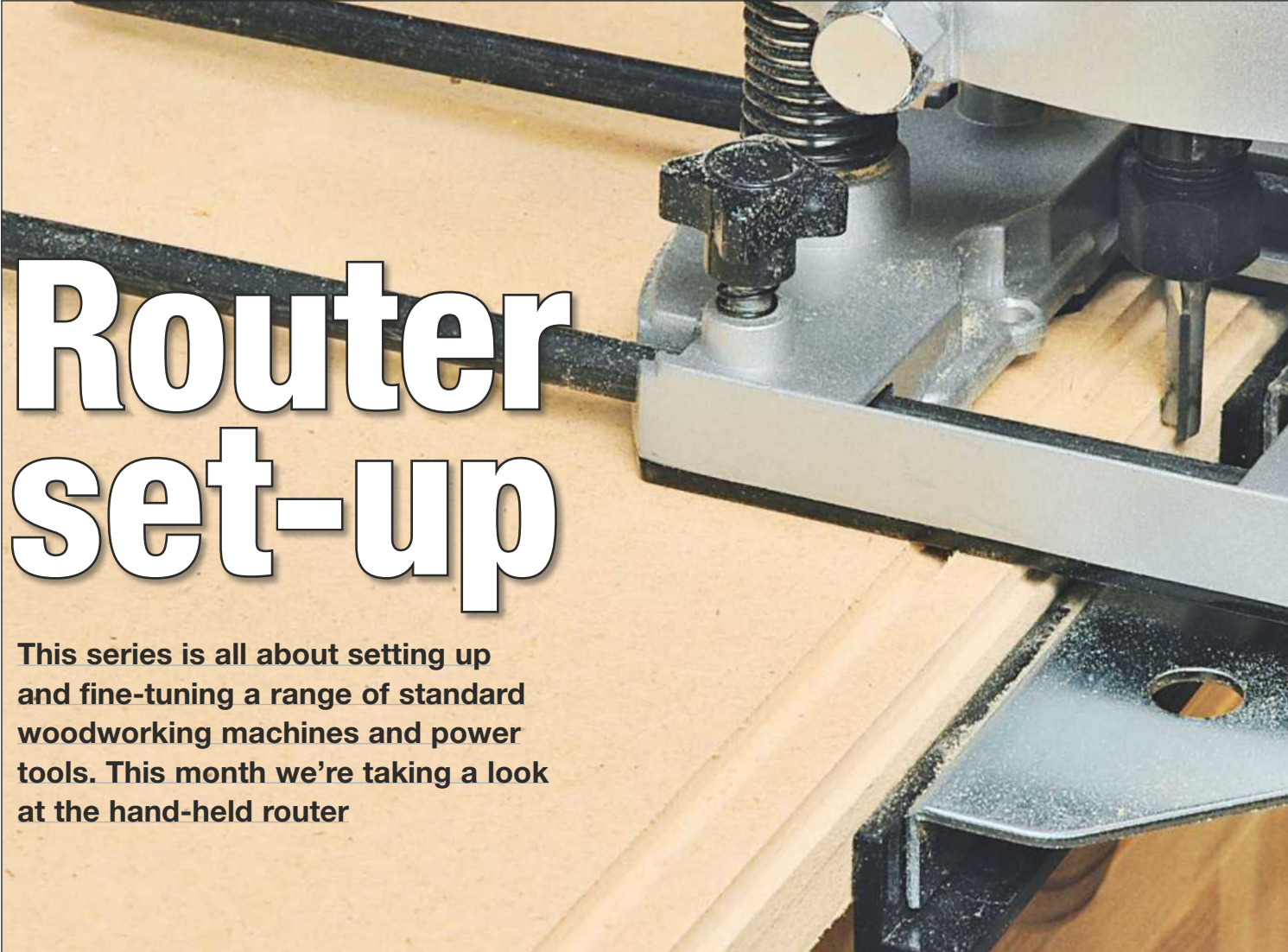


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Router set-up

This series is all about setting up and fine-tuning a range of standard woodworking machines and power tools. This month we're taking a look at the hand-held router

The router has become one of the must-have tools for the enthusiastic woodworker. Over the past couple of decades, availability has improved to such an extent that you can now buy one in the local supermarket along with the weekly shopping!

Prices have also dropped dramatically. In 1996 one of the last Elu MOF177s to be made cost a staggering £350! Ten years later the equivalent machine, by then rebranded DeWalt and uprated to 2000W, cost around £100 less. Today you can buy the same machine for just over £200, with a free fine height adjuster thrown in! That's progress for you...

At the other end of the scale you will find routers from the Far East being sold on the High Street for less than £20.

A helping hand

Whatever router you buy will need to be set up and used properly to get the most out of

it. Remember that in its most basic form a router is just a motor with a collet attached, supported in some kind of framework. It can do very little without some kind of help. This can come in the form of a guide bearing on the cutter, a side fence or both.

The other thing to remember about a router is that it's only another tool. It's not a magic wand that will transform a novice into a master cabinet-maker overnight. It never fails to amaze us how many times we get asked the same question by first-time router owners: "What shall I build with it?" Our reply is: "Don't buy a router because you think you must have one; buy it because you have a use for it!" There are lots of routers in Britain's workshops that have rarely been out of their boxes...

Making a start

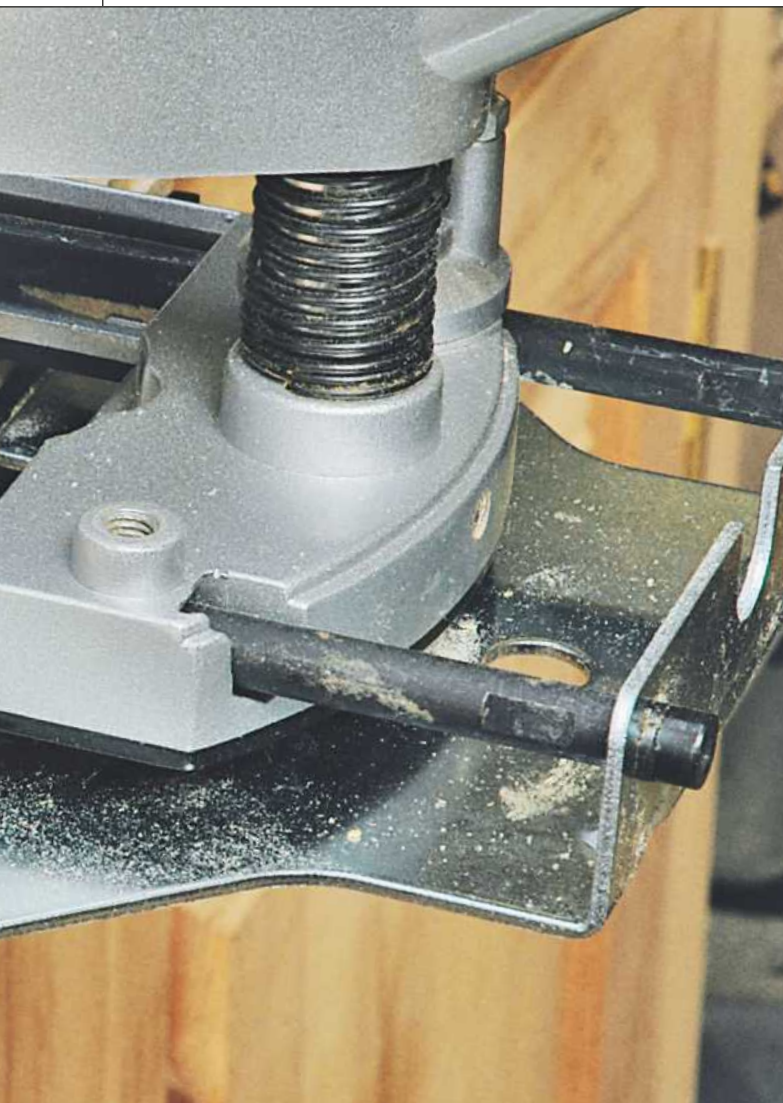
The choice of which router to buy is outside the scope of this article, but whatever your choice it will do no harm to be familiar with

the basic setting-up procedures. If you're already a router owner you should still find this piece interesting. The following is a short guide to getting started with a router and making safe, smooth cuts.

Take a fence

Most routers are supplied with some form of fence. These come in various forms, from simple to sophisticated, but all perform a similar job. The idea is to position the router cutter a set distance from the edge of the workpiece – or in the case of a profile cutter, in line with the edge.

The cheaper guides are pressed metal, usually with the rods permanently attached. They may be crude but they're effective. Some of the more expensive routers are supplied with this design of fence, albeit manufactured to a higher standard. Either type will benefit from the addition of an auxiliary hardwood slider to stabilise the guide arrangement.



Measure up

It's a straightforward job to set the fence so the cutter will follow a path a set distance from the edge of the workpiece. However, don't forget that the extent of the cut is going to be dictated by the size of the cutter, so the measurement needs to be taken from the tip of the cutter at its nearest point in its rotation to the fence. This can be difficult to measure accurately, and if it's critical a test on a scrap piece of material should be made first.

Take the strain

Another use for the slide fence is to reduce the strain on bearing-guided cutters. This is only practical when the cut is straight; for curved work the cutter will need to rely on the bearing alone as the fence will get in the way.

To allow this set-up to take place, the slide fence will have to be divided. On the more elaborate models this is provided for with two separate faces held in place with screws passing through recessed slots.



The price of routers has come down dramatically over the years!



It's always worth adding a hardwood strip to a basic slide fence



More sophisticated fences have adjustable two-part plastic faces



Use a straightedge to align the bearing of a guided cutter with the fences



5

You can buy sub-bases, or make your own in the workshop



6

The sub base can be aligned with a conical alignment tool...

On a less sophisticated fence, simply attach a strip of hardwood and cut a gap in it large enough to clear the cutter.

Set the cutter into the collet of the router and align the slide fence with the router bearing using a straightedge such as a steel rule. I like to set it so that the fence is just clear of the bearing by a whisker. This will ensure that the fence is relieving the pressure on the spigot of the cutter that carries the bearing.

Centre the base

It's not absolutely essential to centre the base on the shaft of the router; it helps if it is centred, but there's no means of adjusting it if it isn't. The more expensive models will be, as near as it matters, centred but even these will vary a little if scrutinised closely.

Most of the time this will have little or no consequence to the user. The only time this becomes an issue is if the cutter is to be guided by a template – either from the outer edge of a round base, or with the help of a guide bush fitted around the cutter.

Add a sub-base

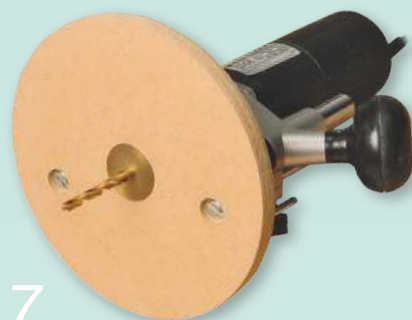
Some routers will provide some means of adjustment of the guide bush to the cutter, but many don't, assuming that this coaxial relationship exists automatically (it doesn't). As already stated, this isn't the most important issue with most typical daily router operations. However, there are times when it does become critical and some form of alignment is required. To achieve this a sub-base is fitted. This can be workshop-made or purchased as an accessory. It is also perfectly possible to align the plate of a router table so it's co-axial with the shaft of the router.

Perfect centre

To achieve alignment, the sub-base needs to be adjustable, and some form of alignment pin is required. There are commercial pins and cones available; in some cases you can simply use a drill bit.

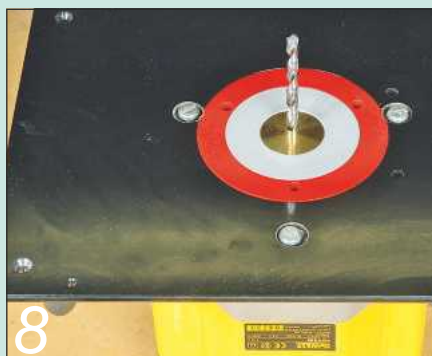
Alignment is achieved using a guide bush set into a sub-base, or the sub-base itself when using a cone. The base is loosely secured to the router and the alignment device is held in the co-axial position through the guidebush and/or the sub-base. This will position the base co-axial with the collet, and it can now be locked in place by tightening the securing screws.

Once the sub-base is aligned, guide bushes can be changed and they will automatically be co-axial. It's worth rechecking the alignment from time to time to ensure that the sub-base hasn't moved.



7

...or by using a drill bit in the collet and a guide bush



8

You can use a similar technique to align a router table plate



9

A sub-base can be bored to fit different router baseplates



10

Cut out any visual errors by using a rule stop fitted to a steel ruler...



11

...to set the distance between the fence and the cutter more accurately



12

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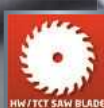
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A



B



C



D



BY GORDON WARR

Turn and turn about

Here's something different for anyone with a lathe. It's a collection of little boxes made from a variety of hardwood offcuts in a range of unusual shapes. They're fun to turn too...

As with many turning projects, the box sizes aren't critical and there's plenty of scope for making variations. I used a number of hardwoods for the ones shown, and you also have the choice of using a different wood for the lids and handles from that used for the box body. It's a good opportunity to use up small offcuts. By the way, I advise you not to use oak for any of these projects, as it contains a lot of tannic acid which can tarnish the contents of the box.

Starting work

The first stage is to prepare the wood to size. With designs A, B and C, this also means sawing to length so that the blank is exactly square. This is then screwed to a backing piece of plywood, using a screw in opposite corners. Once the boxes are finished, the undersides will be completely free of any screw holes.

BOX DESIGN A



1 The hollowing out is done mostly with a square-ended scraper



2 The Sorby platform support is a useful part of their tool rest system



3 Check the depth of the recess by comparing the inside measurement with the outside



4 Sand the inside of the box using a small drum sander in a power drill



5 Take the faceplate off the lathe and apply lacquer to the recess



6 I used a circular plywood template to mark the curved corner lines



7 Remove the waste on the bandsaw, cutting just outside the marked lines



8 A disc sander is ideal for final shaping of the blank down to the lines



9 Stick the lid blank onto the ply and form a shallow rebate all round the edge



10 Reverse the lid, turn it to a dome shape and form the finger grip



11 After finishing, prise the lid off the tape by inserting a knife blade and tapping it down



12 Punch out four self-adhesive felt discs and stick them on the underside of the box

I started this group of projects with box design A, which is shaped a bit like an old-fashioned car wheel nut. The first step is to prepare a piece of ply around 12mm thick and about the size of a small faceplate, and to screw the blank to this. Use just a couple of screws, in opposite corners of the blank.

The ply and the blank are now mounted onto a faceplate. It's essential that they're accurately positioned so they run true when the lathe is switched on. With the work revolving slowly, use a pencil to mark the outline of the hollow.

Forming the recess

The hollowing is fairly basic turning. For most of this stage, I used a 10mm wide standard square-ended scraper, **photo 1**, and one which is similar but which cuts both on its end and for a short distance along its left-hand edge. Avoid using too wide a scraper for this stage, as it will tend to snatch.

To improve the quality of the surface of the wall of the recess you can use a small bowl gouge, held well over on its side. The aim should be to leave a thickness of about 10mm for the wall and the base. Although a wide scraper should not be used for removing the bulk of the waste, one can be employed for final trimming of the bottom of the box. I rested mine on my Sorby platform support to minimize snatching, **photo 2**. Check the final base thickness with a rule, **photo 3**.

Sanding and sealing

I have a collection of small pad and drum sanders which are used in a power drill, and I used several for sanding the inside surfaces, **photo 4**. I also sanded the top edge of the box using sheet abrasive on a sanding block.

At this point I decided to apply the finish to the recess, **photo 5**, putting on three coats of pre-catalysed lacquer and then lightly polishing the surface. This means that burnishing can take place later while the wood is still mounted on the lathe.

Getting curvy

The workpiece can now be removed from its mounting and the curve to two of the corners marked. I used a plywood template I already had for this, **photo 6**; its size was perfect. When bandsawing off the corners, **photo 7**, make sure you remove the two with the screw holes in them! A disc sander is the ideal tool for smoothing away the

remainder of the waste down to the pencil line, **photo 8**, followed by plenty of hand sanding to get it ready for polishing.

Shaping the lid

The disc for the box lid was mounted on the ply backing that was still on the faceplate using double-sided tape. I trimmed it down to the overall diameter required, then formed the rebate to the edge which would provide the location to the body of the box, **photo 9**. This piece can now be reversed and secured to the ply backing again with double-sided tape.

Next, I turned the top of the lid to give an overall dome shape, then formed a recess round a central knob to provide a finger grip, **photo 10**. I used a scraper specially designed for forming the undercutting to mushrooms, and this provided a gentle concave curve to what had effectively become a knob.

This part of the project could then be sanded and lacquered while still on the lathe. I used my favourite finish for small projects – pre-catalysed lacquer, applied with a polisher's mop, **photo 11**. The box body was also finished with the same lacquer.

What lies beneath

There have been many debates amongst turners over recent years about how the underside of projects such as bowls and boxes should be treated. Should they be polished or not? If not, should they be covered with felt, or maybe cork? I decided on a compromise. I would just add small circular pads of felt so that if the box was placed on a well-polished dressing table, for example, there would be no danger of the box marking the surface. I cut the felt discs with a punch, and as the felt was self-adhesive they were quickly stuck to the box base, **photo 12**.



BOX DESIGNS B & C



My second box, design B, simply has a different lid to design A. The lower part of the box is therefore turned, sanded, and polished exactly as before. I decided to use sycamore for the lid to create a strong contrast with the very dark wood of the box. Again I used double-sided tape to hold the sycamore disc onto the plywood backing. This piece had already been planed to thickness to match the depth of the rebate prepared for it to sit in, so the turning was simply confined to trimming the edge to the diameter required.

The handle was made from the same dark wood as the box. I planed it down to thickness and marked out the shape I wanted on it. The outline was then sawn on the bandsaw and sanded smooth by hand. Two shallow hollows formed on opposite faces of the piece using a small drum sander provide a good grip for the fingers. I then lacquered the piece, stuck the finished handle to the lid and polished it up.

Another variation

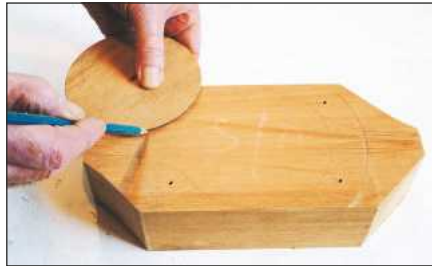
Box design C features a further slight variation. After hollowing out the box recess as before, I formed a dome on the face of the blank using a bowl gouge and sanded it smooth on the lathe, taking care to keep my fingers away from the spinning corners. As with box design B, a rebate around 6mm deep was needed around the inner edge of the recess.

The matching lid was mounted on the lathe using double-sided tape and turned as before to give a diameter which provided a snug fit in the rebate. The darker wood used for the handle allowed for some individuality in the shaping. Shallow recesses for gripping were formed as before, and after sanding it was simply held in place with adhesive.

BOX DESIGN D



1 After trimming the blank roughly to shape, hollow out the central recess



2 Use a circular plywood template to mark out the curved shape of the wings



3 Bore the finger holes through the blank on the drill press, working from both sides



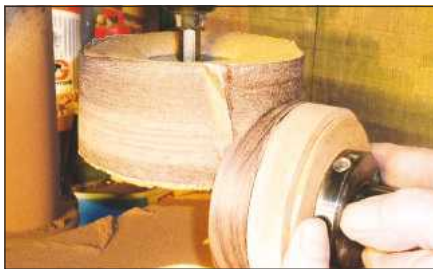
4 Trim the wings to shape, then enlarge the finger holes into a cone profile



5 Round off the finger holes, then sand the wings to their final shape



6 Turn the lid with splayed edges and dish the central area slightly



7 Finish the shaping of the dished lid using a large drum sander



8 Hand sanding is the only practical way to complete the shaping of the lid



9 Lacquer and polish the box and lid, then add baize to the base

The design for box D is quite distinct from the first three. I found a larger block of wood to make it; this allowed the main recess to be both deeper and wider. Because I wanted the two wings to be as long as the block (and my lathe) would allow, I cut it to length with square ends and then cut off the corners so it would clear the bed bars. I mounted it for turning as before.

The hollowing, **photo 1**, proceeded exactly the same as for the other three designs. I then used a round template to mark the shape of the two wings, **photo 2**.

Boring the holes

The hole through each of the wings serves partly as a decorative feature, and also to assist in gripping the box when it's picked up; a finger can be slipped through a hole as if using a cup. Before starting to shape the outside of the blank, I bored the two holes on the bench drill, working from both sides, **photo 3**.

Shaping the wings

Now I could attend to the outside shaping, first bandsawing off the bulk of the waste. Once again a variety of sanding drums were used – some mounted in the bench drill, others used in a hand-held drill. A lot of hand sanding was also needed to achieve the final shape.

Enlarging the holes

I wanted the finger holes to be rounded rather than straight-sided. My first step in achieving this was to use a conical hole enlarger, **photo 4**. Using this from both sides gave holes that sloped rather than being curved. The final rounded profile was achieved with a small drum sander used freehand in a cordless drill, and then with narrow strips of abrasive threaded through the holes. The outer rim of each hole was also well rounded, with a flapwheel sander used to blend the holes with the curve of the outside, **photo 5**.

Making the lid

I started by turning the lid blank to a disc shape, but with the edges splayed and with this surface slightly hollow as it would form the area gripped to remove the lid, **photo 6**. I hollowed the upper surface next, and finished the shaping using my sanding drums, **photo 7**, followed by some hand sanding, **photo 8**. My aim was to reduce the raised rim of the disc on opposite edges to make two high parts and two lower ones.

The final polishing to both lid and base was carried out with the pieces off the lathe, and this time I added a piece of self-adhesive green baize to the underside to complete my fourth box, **photo 9**.





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BY COLIN SIMPSON



Sycamore globe

This round pot is an exercise in creating a hollow form with a narrow mouth – quite a challenge for any turner. As I varnished it and enhanced the pattern, it began to resemble a distorted medieval globe...

I've had this butt of sycamore lying around for about two years, in the hope that it might develop some attractive spalting. This occurs when timber is attacked by fungus that creates discoloration and zone lines in the wood. It degrades the timber, eventually returning it to the soil, but can be particularly attractive in certain woods so long as the fungus hasn't caused too much decay. The trick is to use the wood when the fungus has created a pattern but hasn't softened it too much.

Sizing things up

My particular butt was about 350mm in diameter, but had a number of radial cracks around its circumference. I chainsawed off a piece about 300mm long, having first cut off a section from one end to remove the end-grain checks.

I then cut a 280mm diameter blank from the block to remove the radial checks, **photo 1**. I'm going to turn this piece, hollowing through the endgrain. The pith

(the first year's growth for the tree or branch) will stay in the finished piece. I usually leave the pith out of bowl or vase blanks when I cut them. However, I figured that most of the pith would be removed in the hollowing process and the little bit that would be left in the base of the vase would be thin enough not to split. Besides which, I had another trick up my sleeve which would also help reduce the chances of a split developing from the pith. I'll explain later.

Getting a grip

The first chucking on the lathe is between centres. With large, heavy pieces like this I like to bury the four-prong drive in the end grain. This is a safety precaution, as it's less likely to fly off the lathe should the drive lose its bite. To 'bury' the drive, drill a hole about 25mm deep in the centre of the piece, the diameter of which is the diameter of the shaft of your four-prong drive, **photo 2**. I use a 38mm spade bit to do this.

Now mount the piece between centres,



1 I first cut a 280mm diameter blank from the block to remove the radial checks



2 Drill a hole in the centre to match the diameter of the shaft of your four-prong drive



3 Use a ½in fingernail profile bowl gouge to make push cuts on the ends and cut a chucking spigot



4 True up the circumference to create a blank that's just under 260mm in diameter



5 Mark a line on the piece about 100mm from the top to show the maximum diameter



6 Start shaping the piece at the bottom with the ½in bowl gouge, working back to the line



7 Then shape some of the top before blending the two curves together smoothly



8 The final profile you achieve should resemble an egg rather than a rugby ball

true up both ends and turn the piece to a cylinder. The lathe speed was around 500rpm and I used a ½in fingernail profile bowl gouge to make push cuts on the ends and to cut a chucking spigot, **photo 3**; then I trued up the circumference, **photo 4**. This gave me a blank just under 260mm in diameter and 260mm long.

First shaping

Mark a line on the piece about 100mm from the top, **photo 5**. This will be the widest part of the vessel. It's always more aesthetically pleasing with a piece like this if the widest part is not on the centre line. Try to get it about one third of the height from the top or bottom of the piece. Think in terms of an egg shape, not a rugby ball.

Now start shaping the piece. I started at the bottom, still using the ½in bowl gouge, **photo 6**. I also like to shape some of the top, **photo 7**, before blending the two curves together to get a profile looking something like **photo 8**.

Reverse gear

I do the final shaping once the piece has been reversed onto the chuck. I used my large gripper jaws to hold this piece. As an added precaution, particularly on spalted wood, I like to glue the piece into the chuck, **photo 9**. I also bring the tailstock up for additional support.

As I said earlier, the spalting can decay the wood and sometimes it's difficult to achieve a good finish from the tools, **photo 10**. Heavy sanding is not the answer, as this will abrade the softer wood more than the harder areas, leaving an even worse finish.

Surface tension

One solution is to give the piece a very liberal coat of thinned-down sanding sealer, **photo 11**. Leave this to soak in and sharpen your gouge. I used a smaller bowl gouge for this finishing cut and I don't grind the wings back as far as usual. I also grind away some of the bevel to reduce the area rubbing on the wood.

Start at the widest part of the vase and cut down to the narrowest part, taking very light cuts, **photo 12**. Aim to get fine shavings, not dust or chips. Repeat this process of sanding sealer and fine finishing cuts until you're happy with the surface finish. Then sand the outside down to 400 grit.

Starting the hole

Now for the hollowing. Before removing the tailstock it's good practice to check the

tightness of the chuck, **photo 13**. This is wet wood, remember, and as it loses moisture it shrinks and can become loose in the chuck. Keep checking the tightness during the hollowing process, particularly if you're very slow at hollowing.

It's much easier to hollow endgrain if you drill a hole down the centre of the piece to the depth of the hollowed area. I put a 38mm spade bit in a Jacobs chuck in the tailstock to do this, **photo 14**. Keep withdrawing the bit as you drill deeper to release the shavings.

Opening wide

Initial hollowing can be done with the fingernail profile bowl gouge, **photo 15**. Imagine the opening of the piece to be a clock face and point the flute of the gouge towards about 10 o'clock. The left-hand or lower wing of the tool will do the cutting. Push the tool into the drilled hole and, as you get a cut, push the handle away from you. Repeat this cut, going a little deeper into the hole each time so you widen and undercut the hole.

Photo 16 shows my stance whilst doing this cut. Try not to crouch and look into the hole; you won't see anything anyway. Instead keep more upright and tuck the handle of the tool under your forearm. This helps to counteract the pivot force that will occur as the tool overhangs the toolrest.

Stop the lathe frequently to remove the build-up of shavings inside the vessel. I have a compressed air line to help with this, but a straw or a short piece of garden hose pipe will suffice, **photo 17**. Just remember to blow and not suck!

Specialist help

There are many specialist hollowing tools on the market. **Photo 18** shows my Hamlet Big Brother tip on a homemade shaft. The articulated head on these tools are useful to undercut the shoulder of vases and hollow forms. The top cover on these tools acts as a depth stop and prevents you taking too large a cut.

In use, rotate the tool anticlockwise to about 09:30 and let the top cover rub on the inside wall. Then slowly rotate the tool clockwise until you feel a cut starting. This is a controlled way of starting the cut. The tool can be used on both directions so you can push the tool down the side wall from the top of the vessel or pull it back up from the base.

Quick work

Used properly, these tools can remove a lot of wood quickly. **Photo 19** shows a very



9 Reverse the piece onto the chuck and glue it in place for additional security



10 Spalting decays the wood and sometimes it's difficult to achieve a good finish



11 A liberal coat of thinned sanding sealer hardens up the soft wood fibres



12 Start at the widest part and cut down to the narrowest part, taking very light cuts



13 Keep checking the tightness of the chuck, particularly if the wood is at all wet



14 Drill a large-diameter hole down the centre of the piece to the depth of the hollowed area



15 Push the gouge into the drilled hole and, as it cuts, push the handle away from you



16 Keep the handle of the tool under your forearm for greater stability and control



17 Stop the lathe frequently and blow out the build-up of shavings inside the vase



18 A specialist hollowing tool like this makes short work of cutting through endgrain



19 This home-made gadget is ideal for clearing shavings from the inside of hollow forms



20 Use the edge of the opening for leverage to help remove wood from the inside wall



21 Then use a $\frac{3}{8}$ in spindle gouge to clean up and shape the neck and opening of the vase



22 Reverse the vase onto a padded dolly and bring up the tailstock so you can clean up the base



23 Use the $\frac{3}{8}$ in spindle gouge again to remove the spigot and slightly dish the base



24 Pour enough diluted pva wood glue into the hole to cover the entire inside of the vase



25 Then pour in a couple of handfuls of sawdust collected from the bandsaw and shake it around



useful home-made gadget for clearing shavings from the inside of hollow forms. As you cut deeper into the vessel, you can use the side of the opening as a pivot point for the tool's shaft, **photo 20**. This will, of course, damage the wall of the opening, so aim to hollow through a slightly smaller hole than the finished dimension to leave some room for cleaning up.

Continue the hollowing process until you have an even wall thickness of 10 to 12mm from base to rim. Next, use a $\frac{3}{8}$ in spindle gouge to clean up and shape the neck and opening of the vessel, **photo 21**. Now you can sand this part, blending it in with the rest of the vessel.

Back to front

Photo 22 shows my method of reverse-chucking the piece to remove the chucking spigot and finish the base. It's a mushroom shaped dolly held in my chuck with a piece of thin leather sandwiched between this and the neck of the vase. The tailstock is brought up to the original point in the centre of the chucking spigot to keep the piece pushed up against the dolly.

This method of holding the piece gives me access to the chucking spigot and base, **photo 23**. Use the $\frac{3}{8}$ in spindle gouge again to remove the spigot and slightly dish or concave the base, leaving just a small stub for the revolving centre. This stub needs to be removed off the lathe with a sharp chisel.

Inner texture

At this stage the piece is all but finished, but the inside of the vessel didn't have a particularly good finish due to the nature of the spalted wood, so I decided to give it an overall texture instead. Apply strips of masking tape around the opening of the vessel to protect the wood from overspill. Then pour enough diluted pva wood glue into the hole to cover the entire inside of the vessel, **photo 24**.

Swirl the glue round inside to get an even coating; then pour in a couple of handfuls of sawdust collected from the bandsaw, **photo 25**. Shake this around to ensure the whole of the inside is covered and then leave it to dry. This 'cheat' covers up a poor finish on the inside of vessels like this. It may also help stabilise the pith in the base of the piece so it's less likely to split.

Finish the job by giving the exterior a couple of coats of Danish oil, leaving it to dry between coats, and step back to admire your work.

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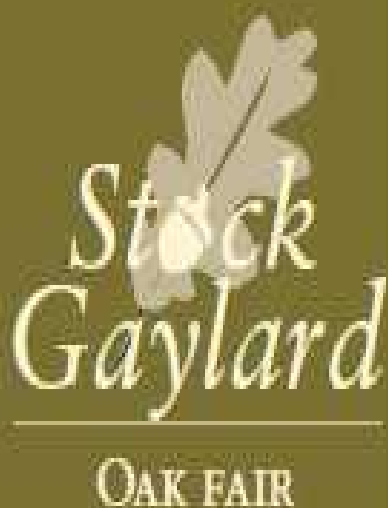


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BY ALAN HOLTHAM

Turning for beginners

3: HOLDING THE WORK

Once you've bought your lathe and some basic tools, the next consideration is how you are going to grip the work securely enough to allow it to be turned safely. In fact, holding the work is more than half the battle in woodturning, and with experience you'll soon develop a range of different strategies to suit the item being made and your particular way of working



1 Spindles are held between centres in the spindle and headstock

Holding spindles is relatively easy, as these are just held between centres which fit into the Morse tapers of the main spindle and tailstock, **photo 1**. The drive centres for the headstock are available in a variety of sizes and patterns, depending on the diameter of work you are turning. One with four prongs and a diameter of about 1in will cover virtually all your needs, **photo 2**. For smaller section material, a $\frac{5}{8}$ in or $\frac{1}{2}$ in diameter centre might be required, but don't bother buying one of these unless you actually need it. There are some two-pronged versions available, **photo 3**, but these should be used with care as you can split the workpiece if you're too heavy-handed with them.

The tailstock end

At the tailstock end, the work is supported by another centre, which ideally should be of the revolving type, **photo 4**. Although they're bulkier, they spin with the work so you can apply enough pressure to get it secure without worrying about overheating.

If you use the cheaper fixed or 'dead' type of centre, there's a real chance of



2

A 1in diameter drive centre with four prongs will cover most of your needs



3

Use two-pronged versions (right) with care, as they can split the work

burning the work, **photo 5**, particularly if as a nervous beginner you tend to overtighten things. If your lathe comes with a dead centre as standard, it's well worth buying a revolving version. They don't cost a fortune, but do buy a reasonable quality one; the cheaper versions are often poorly made,

with inadequate bearings that can introduce vibration problems, **photo 6**.

That's all you need for working between centres, but there are many situations where you can't hold your work like this – for example, when you need free access to one end of the workpiece – but in this case

there is a much wider range of options available for mounting the work securely.

Introducing faceplates

The conventional holding device is a faceplate, **photo 7**, and in fact a lot of flat work is still called faceplate turning even if



4

At the tailstock end, a revolving type centre is the ideal choice



5

There's a real chance of burning the work with the 'dead' type of centre



6

Cheaper dead centres often have small and inadequate bearings



7

A faceplate allows free access to one end of the workpiece



8

Faceplates come in a range of sizes, up to 6in in diameter



9

Steel faceplates are best because they don't distort when attached

it's actually held by some other means. I was taught to turn in the days where a lathe had just a set of centres and a faceplate. If you couldn't hold the work by either of these methods, you then had to make some form of temporary wooden friction chuck as part of each individual job.

Fortunately, things have moved on and there's now a whole variety of very versatile chucks that provide instant solutions for virtually every holding situation. I'll cover these in detail in the next issue.

Advanced chucking systems are now a necessity rather than a luxury, and most serious turners will have at least one. However, there are still situations where a simple faceplate, or its close derivative the screwchuck, provides the easiest and most efficient method of holding work. In fact, a faceplate may be the only way of getting the initial hold whilst you turn some sort of spigot or recess for subsequent gripping with a chuck.

Different sizes

Faceplates come in a variety of sizes, but you don't need a lot. As usual, it depends on what sort of work you do, but for general use a 4in version is all that you'll need. It's worth thinking about adding a 6in one if you want to do a lot of big bowl work, and

perhaps a smaller one if your ambitions are more modest, **photo 8**.

Although a faceplate is apparently very simple, it's important to buy a good-quality one. I would prefer a machined steel faceplate with a short boss, as this will run true and is less likely to distort than the aluminium versions. As well as distorting as you screw them onto uneven workpieces, the aluminium ones also tend to chew up round the fixing holes after only a little use. This doesn't happen with steel, **photo 9**.

Strength matters

Many of the cheaper lathes now seem to come with a standard 6in cast-iron faceplate, which as well as being thin and not particularly accurate, also has a long central boss which introduces another potential source of distortion and vibration, **photo 10**. It really is worth investing in a better quality one.

Remember that if you have to screw the faceplate on to a very uneven surface, strength is very important, though you may still have to pack it out in some situations if you need to adjust the orientation of the blank. Plenty of screw holes is an advantage here; try to put a screw through each packing wedge as well to stop them flying out, **photo 11**.

Faceplate problems

When you start hanging big and heavy pieces onto the spindle, it's vital that the faceplate is screwed right up tight before you start the lathe. It's so easy to leave it a fraction of a turn off tight; then as soon as you start up, the inertia of the blank causes it to screw on with a juddering thump. This makes it extremely difficult to remove later, **photo 12**.

If jammed faceplates are something you regularly struggle with, and you're sure they are up tight before you start each time, then try fitting a washer of some sort between the plate and the headstock spindle. Any material will do for this as long as it's soft, **photo 13**. Cork, fibre, leather or cardboard are all fine, and a washer always eliminates the problem.

Do also remember to clean out the threads of the headstock spindle occasionally, as this can stop the faceplate screwing right up. Take great care not to cross-thread it, particularly when loading very heavy workpieces, as the spindle is difficult and expensive to replace.

Screw on a chuck

An even more useful device for holding workpieces is the screwchuck, and I would rate this as one of the most useful lathe



10

A long central boss introduces another potential source of distortion



11

Use packing pieces with a screw through each one on uneven surfaces



12

If the faceplate isn't tight, it can screw on over-tight as you start the lathe



13

Avoid a jammed faceplate by fitting a soft washer between it and the headstock



14

Screwchucks are just small faceplates with one central fixing screw



15

Change the length of screw to vary the protrusion from the chuck

16 Better chucks allow you to adjust the screw seating position



17 Ideally the screw should be held in by a threaded boss



accessories. Again available in various shapes and sizes, this is essentially just a small faceplate with a fixed central screw. Common sizes are 1½ and 2½in in diameter, **photo 14**.

A standard screwchuck should take normal woodscrews so you can replace them as they wear. The only snag with this is that they are usually No 14s, which can be very difficult to find unless you know an old-fashioned ironmongers. If you try and use thinner gauge screws, they never seem to lock in securely. Beware of screwchucks with permanently fixed screws.

Varying the length

For maximum versatility, you need to be able to vary the amount the screw projects from the chuck. While you can do this to some extent by changing the length of the screw, **photo 15**, better chucks will allow you to adjust the seating position so you can control the length even more precisely, **photo 16**.

If you're buying a screwchuck, try to find one where the screw is held in by a threaded boss and the head is retained by a spline in the screw slot, **photo 17**. This sounds very complicated, but all it means is that the screw cannot then turn as you twist it in or out of the work. Screwchucks that



18

A 2½in screwchuck with extra fixing holes can double up as a small faceplate



19

Start by making the right-sized pilot hole to the correct depth



20

Screwing in the chuck will throw up a raised burr round the hole...



21

...which will result in a gap between the screwchuck and the workpiece



22

Drop the central fixing boss in lower so there's space for the burr



23

On longer pieces, it's best to turn the end of the work slightly concave...

rely on holding the screw just with an Allen key into the side are rarely successful, and become very frustrating to use – either the screw keeps turning, or the work becomes loose as you are working.

If you're on a limited budget and it's a toss up between buying a faceplate or a screwchuck, then buy just a 2½in screwchuck which has additional screw holes. Then you can remove the centre screw and use this as a small faceplate as well, **photo 18**.

Screwchuck problems

Many newcomers to turning really struggle to get screwchucks to hold securely, and give up on them as a result. This is a shame, because it's one of the simplest and most useful of all holding devices and is foolproof as long as you follow a few basic rules.

Firstly, it's important that you make the pilot hole the correct size and drill it to the right depth, **photo 19**. Forcing the screwchuck in without a pilot hole will not give a stronger grip but will actually work in reverse, as the thread crumbles and strips as it struggles to form.

Secondly, be aware that the action of screwing in the chuck will throw up a burr around the hole, **photo 20**. This will stop the

timber seating firmly, leaving a gap between the screwchuck and the end of the timber, **photo 21**. A tiny amount of play at the chuck end becomes greatly magnified at the other unsupported end, and any attempt to turn with it like this results in the timber being torn off the screw, which is when most people give up!

A good seating

There are several ways of overcoming this and getting a secure seating. If the chuck has a central fixing boss, try dropping this in lower than the rest of the chuck face so there's somewhere for the burr to go when you tighten up, **photo 22**. For longer pieces, firstly turn them between centres and trim up the end square – or preferably make it slightly concave, **photo 23**, so that the rim of the chuck fits up tight and there is absolutely no chance of any wobble, **photo 24**.

If you take this much care, it should be possible to hold a piece of sound 3 x 3in timber about 6in long with just a single screw into the end grain, **photo 25**. If the timber is soft or much longer, use the additional screw holes as well, **photo 26**.

Sometimes, no matter how careful you are, the screw will not hold in end grain. In these situations, try drilling a hole through

the blank and putting in a dowel at right angles to the grain. Once the screw gets hold of this, **photo 27**, there's no way it will come off! If you're attaching to cross-grain work such as a bowl, then a single screwchuck will hold surprisingly large pieces providing it seats flat, **photo 28**.

Summing up

The one disadvantage of both screwchucks and faceplates is that they are invasive, leaving you with screw holes as a permanent reminder of the holding method. In the case of the screwchuck you can part off clear of the screw, but this is rather wasteful, particularly if you are working with expensive timbers, **photo 29**.

Nevertheless, both faceplates and screwchucks are essential lathe accessories and you'll need to use both of them at some stage, no matter what type of woodturning you are doing.

NEXT MONTH

Alan looks at how to hold the work using that other big essential, the combination chuck. Although this is initially expensive it's quicker to use, far less wasteful and leaves no visible trace of its use on the finished item



24 ...so the rim of the chuck fits tightly up against it and can't wobble



25 You should be able to hold a sizeable workpiece such as this with just a single screw



26 Use additional screw fixings for longer workpieces in softer wood



27 A cross dowel through the blank will ensure the firmest screw fixing



28 On cross-grain work a single screwchuck will hold surprisingly large pieces



29 Parting off clear of the screw is wasteful when turning expensive wood

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Try and mitre square

This stainless steel square measures 160 x 100mm. It boasts an accuracy of more than 99.8 per cent, and offers one or two extra features compared to a traditional try square. The mitre angle is always present, and in both directions too. Engraved scales on each edge also assist in measuring and marking, and

the scales are set to measure the vertical distance for extra convenience when you're laying out a workpiece.

The square is available in imperial or metric versions; for some reason the metric version costs a bit more at £25.45. This is well made and useful tool, and is probably my favourite of this particular bunch. **MC**

Mitre marking saddle

Sometimes known as a box mitre, this double-ended anodized aluminium square mitre saddle is of very real benefit when it comes to marking out and checking joinery items. It measures 200mm on its longest edge, and the two internal faces are 60mm deep.

There are times when it's necessary to square round a moulding (especially if you forgot to do it earlier on), and this is absolutely the best sort of tool for the job. Don't be tempted to use it as a mitre saddle for paring your joints, though; the soft metal could be easily marked as you chisel your ovolos down to a perfect 45°. Undoubtedly harder to manufacture, I would still have liked to see this tool made in stainless steel, as I think it needs to be more robust. **MC**



Kiridashi marking knives

Marking knives are a very popular item amongst both serious and aspiring woodworkers, and few take their knives more seriously than the Japanese. These knives are made from very hard high carbon steel laminated onto a softer but tough steel backing to give a precise and long-lasting point. They come in four different widths – 9, 12, 15 and 18mm – and are all 170mm long.

Unlike the familiar craft knife with two bevels, a marking knife has a flat back and a single bevel. This ensures maximum accuracy, but does restrict its use to the right hand only. If you want a knife to use in either hand, look for the vee point version which can be switched with ease. It costs £18.46.

The Kiridashi is a comfortable knife to use. The textured handle feels good in the hand, but can be sheathed if the user prefers. It comes in a protective plastic wallet, but I think I'd be looking for additional ways to guard that fine cutting tip if it were mine. **MC**



£13.45

Mitre square

This tool is very pleasing to the eye. It features engraved stainless steel like its stable mates, but this time there are no numerical scales; only decorative patterns and Japanese characters. Its solid base measures 115 x 13mm, allowing it to be hooked against the edge of the stock when marking mitres. It can also be

stood upright for setting machine fences, saw blades and work tables – useful, for example, if your table saw indicator is not quite as accurate as you'd wish.

Like the other tools featured here, it's made by the Shinwa Rules Company to what appear to be their usual very high standards. **MC**

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There are some power tools that make a huge difference to one's operating activities. This new Bosch plunge saw and rail system has certainly changed aspects of my working – and hugely for the better

Bosch GKT 55 GCE plunge saw & rail

Faced with the prospect of ripping down a full-size 18mm ply board, a solitary and difficult struggle at the saw table is now a thing of the past. And while it has always been just about possible to make a half-decent cut with a regular hand-held circular saw and a straightedge, the difference between that and the Bosch plunge saw is astonishing.

A simple concept

The saw and rail concept has been around for a while now, but every new version seems to advance the original design just that little bit further. In use, the rail – a precision-extruded length of low-friction aluminium – is simply laid onto the object board, where it remains

£439



in position thanks to high-grip rubber inlays and a combination of operator pressure plus the weight of the saw itself. The two rails supplied with this saw are 1.6m long, and pair fix together with no more tools than a coin of the realm.

Maximum accuracy

The rail has an additional flat strip of rubber inserted in the leading edge. This is trimmed with the first cut and ensures that the blade will make successive cuts with maximum accuracy right up to the edge, as well as preventing breakout on ply and veneered boards.

As long as you position the rail on the correct side of the marked line (ie not on the waste side), it's as simple as making a mark at each end, laying on the rail and off you go.

Standard features

The saw itself is a solid piece of kit (I dropped it off the bench once and it didn't seem to be harmed in any way) and a great example of the quality of today's machining and manufacturing techniques. The thin kerf blade is completely shrouded by the base and body housing, and plunges to any required depth from 0 to 57mm. The depth is simply set by a grip lever with a red plastic tab indicator. This is a clever little

device which has two positions to take into account the thickness of the guide rail itself. It's a real delight to use.

Managing the dust

Like all hand-held circular saws – and especially one where the blade is almost fully enclosed – extraction is a key issue, and here we have a standard (or as standard as we can



With the two protective end clips removed, the rail sections are readily fixed together with the twist of a coin



The thumb-operated lock button in action on top of the handle. Note the red spindle-lock cover positioned forward of it



The depth of cut is set using the large scale. The smaller angle scale for setting bevel cuts is at the front of the saw body



The exhaust port swivels for ease of use. The knob on the sole plate adjusts the grip on the rail

hope for) diameter outlet port that should fit most vacuum systems. The enhancement on this one is its ability to rotate and thus achieve the most convenient angle for both saw and operator. It's always good to be able to concentrate on the cut itself, and everything that can be done to smooth the transit of the cable and hose umbilical is a good thing in everybody's books.

Who needs instructions?

We men have a (deserved) reputation for impatience when it comes to learning how a new tool or device functions, but the Bosch saw and rail system almost encourages the user to chuck the instructions away. Certainly, after I'd managed to lose the set that came with the test sample, I found that everything was as straightforward as I could have wished for.

The saw, in trademark Bosch Blue (Pantone 652), has bright red accents which denote adjustments and points of interest generally. Thanks to this eminently sensible scheme, I was able to locate the spindle lock with ease and thus effect a blade removal without frustration. And a very interesting blade it is too – 165mm diameter, thirty teeth and a very thin kerf all combine to produce one of the finest cuts I've ever seen. The results were as though I was working in a furniture factory.

Safety first

It's a pretty safe system too, and compared to the risks involved in working with a table saw, you could almost give it a PG rating. Once the saw is securely positioned on its rail, it requires the sliding of a thumb-operated lock button before the saw can be lowered into position, then it's just a case of pulling the trigger and sawing away. Such is the cutting accuracy of this saw that it's also possible to plunge directly downwards into a board for something like a sink cut-out, with little fear of skewing the cut and messing up your 4m length of expensive worktop.

Summing up

I have to give this rail saw system a big thumbs up, and all the others that went before. Bosch has managed to eliminate the shortcomings of earlier models and, if you've been waiting for the right time to invest in a rail system, now is it. **MC**

SPECIFICATION

MOTOR	1400W
BLADE DIAMETER	165mm
NO-LOAD SPEED	3600 to 6250rpm
BLADE TILT	-1° to 47°
MAX DEPTH OF CUT	at 90° 57mm
	at 45° 42mm
WEIGHT	4.7kg
ACCESSORIES	blade, two 1.6m rails, rail connector, rail storage bag, L-BOXX for saw

VERDICT

This is a superb piece of kit that will hugely improve your making.

PROS ■ Accuracy and ease of use
 ■ Quality of finish
 ■ Compatible with other rail brands

CONS ■ Mild irritation with trailing cord and extractor hose

VALUE FOR MONEY ■■■■■■
PERFORMANCE ■■■■■■

FURTHER INFORMATION

- Bosch Power Tools
- 01895 838743
- www.bosch-pt.com



The saw and rail ensure a professional quality of cut on 18mm birch ply



The black strip on the underside of the saw is the low-friction groove which engages with the rail and ensures a smooth action



The first cut will trim the protective strip to a perfect fit. The clear adjustable dust shield increases extraction efficiency



Once the first cut has been completed on a sacrificial board, the saw is ready for proper use. Note the offcut of protective strip

If you don't have room for a static workbench, the next best thing is to buy one that you can fold away when it's not in use. This clever bench from Wolfcraft could fit the bill

Wolfcraft Master 600 bench



The Wolfcraft Master 600 bench folds up for carrying and storing and is adjustable in height. It is constructed in steel and rustproof alloy with an mdf bench top, plastic handles, feet and bench dogs.

The product arrives flat-packed ready for the purchaser to assemble.

Putting it together

The first thing to do is to study the very clear diagrams in the instruction book before you set to work. Then identify each part, particularly the bolts which come in three different lengths. You'll need a Pozidriv No 2 screwdriver and a 10mm spanner to tighten the nuts.

Follow the instructions step by step and you should have no problems. An extra pair of hands will be useful, especially if your assistant has had some previous experience of assembling Meccano! I got the handles the wrong way round at first and it's quite tricky to get them exactly aligned, as you may observe in some of the photos. I found it more comfortable to assemble the bench on a table before lifting on the mdf top, which is the heaviest part. The whole job took about an hour.

£87
(web price)

Bench features

The bench top is made in three pieces and constructed in 19mm thick mdf. The handles are turned to open and close the jaws. When closed it measures 650 x 420mm. The 650 x 115mm centre section can be lifted out to increase the holding capacity. The wood to be worked on is then gripped firmly for sawing, planing, sanding, drilling and so on. One-handed cramps can also be used to hold work down firmly to the bench.

The black surface is marked out with a protractor, ruler and grid, and warnings not to sit or stand on the bench. However, this is a strong, robust bench with a maximum load weight of 120kg, so it's



Study the instructions carefully and identify all the parts before starting the assembly



The narrow central section of the bench can be lifted out to increase the holding capacity



Tightening the two front handles allows you to grip work securely for a wide range of tasks



The bench top can be tilted by up to 65°, so it can also be used as a drawing board or easel

very suitable for holding small machines such as a drill press. The front and back edges of the top are slightly recessed in the centre, which makes sitting at the bench more comfortable. The top right-hand corner of the top has a small magnetic dish to hold screws and nails.

Holding the work

There are eight 20mm diameter holes which allow you to use the four yellow bench dogs supplied in various combinations. The dogs are made with two parts to give different holding configurations. When combined, the V-groove holds round material vertically. The V profile also holds round material very firmly horizontally. Circular work is held by arranging only one part of the dogs and then adjusting the bench jaws as required.

Easy adjustments

The bench is easily adjustable in height from 780mm to 950mm by loosening and tightening the two lower handles and pulling up or pushing down the top. It can be matched with the height of another bench to give an extra working area, or to hold a machine – an extremely useful feature. Furthermore, the table can be tilted to an angle of 65°. This makes it suitable for use as a drawing board or even an easel.

The bench hinges down flat and the front legs are pushed in with the foot when it is to be carried or stored. My one criticism is the sharpness of the pressed steel cross brace which your fingers grasp to carry the bench. I have since covered the bottom edge of mine with some split plastic trim, which has made a big improvement.

Summing up

This is the sort of bench which is useful for a wide range of tasks in and around the workshop and home. There are other similar products, but the Wolfcraft Master 600 is sturdy, strong and well designed, and the ability to adjust the height to suit the operator makes it outstanding in my opinion. Some would criticise the mdf bench top and prefer solid wood, but I have an older model of this bench and it's still looking good, with no evidence of any rust on the steel parts. *IW*

SPECIFICATION

BENCH TOP	650 x 420mm
WORKING HEIGHT	780 to 950mm
MAX SPAN	115mm
MAX SPAN WITH JAWS	435mm
MAX CLAMPING ANGLE	10°
BENCH TILT	0-65°
MAX LOADING	120kg
WEIGHT	15kg

VERDICT

This is an excellent folding bench at a fair price, and is strongly recommended.

PROS ■ Strong and sturdy
■ Adjustable height
■ Many work-holding options

CONS ■ The mdf bench top
■ Sharp edges on cross brace

VALUE FOR MONEY ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■
PERFORMANCE ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■

FURTHER INFORMATION

■ Wolfcraft
■ www.wolfcraft.com



The bench hinges down and folds into a very compact package for carriage or storage



The bench has a maximum load weight of 120kg, so can comfortably support small machines



The V profile of the bench dogs holds round material securely in a horizontal position



Circular work can be held by placing the bench dogs at an angle and tightening the jaws

£60
(web price)

Trend are accepted as world leaders in all aspects of routing technology, with a huge range of products from routers to cutters, and jigs to router tables. Here's a look at one of their jigs

Trend Varijig angle guide

Few of us have a saw bench large enough to tackle full sheets of man-made boards, and using a hand-held circular saw is only part of the answer. Now Trend have solved the problem with their Varijig variable angle guide. This is intended to be used with a router, a circular saw, a jigsaw, and even a biscuit jointer.

Although a cramped batten can be used to guide all these tools, the guide simplifies the job, promotes accuracy and speeds up the operation.

Assembling the guide

Some assembly work is required, but this is a simple job helped considerably by the excellent instructions. For most uses the arm will be set at the 90° position, and for all the preset positions of the arm the brass knurled locking knob will be located in one of the threaded holes, and further secured with the adjustable locking lever. For random angles, the locking lever on its own provides the necessary securing. The arm is

SPECIFICATION

ARM DIMENSIONS	1070 x 54 x 16mm
ANGLE RANGE	25° to 155°
PRE-SET ANGLES	30°, 45°, 60°, 90°, 120°, 135° & 150°
ANGLE TOLERANCE	± 0.2°
ROUTER WORKING LENGTH	915mm at 90°
CIRCULAR SAW WORKING LENGTH	780mm at 90°

VERDICT

This guide is very well made, and extremely quick to set up and use.

PROS

- Precision engineering
- Easy to set up and adjust
- Extremely accurate

CONS ■ Needs three cramps to secure it

VALUE FOR MONEY

PERFORMANCE

FURTHER INFORMATION

- Trend
- 01923 249911
- www.trend-uk.com



The Varijig guide features seven pre-set angles, selected using a brass locking knob



The guide's scale is clearly marked in both metric and imperial measurements



The guide must be accurately positioned and securely cramped to the workpiece



Forming a trench with a router was a quick and easy operation to carry out



The guide was equally accurate when used with a hand-held circular saw

secured to the main body with an alloy connector with two sets of knobs.

In use, the guide must be secured to the workpiece by three cramps – two on the main body and one at the outer end of the arm. Soft-grip cramps are best for this, or better still the purpose-made cramps available from Trend.

Using the jig

My first trials were using the guide in conjunction with a router fitted with a plain cutter. I made a number of trenches in mdf with this, some at 90° and some at other angles. Next I made a series of cuts using a circular saw, before moving on to using the guide with a jigsaw. The jigsaw is best used where the cut is restricted to the middle part of the material, such as making a sink cutout in a worktop. Finally, I formed a few kerfs using my biscuit joiner, although this is likely to be the least used aspect of the guide.

Summing up

The guide's quality is superb; it has been produced to the highest standards of engineering, and is easy to use and adjust. To be on the safe side, when making any of the cuts at 90°, I double-checked the setting by measuring from the end of the workpiece to the arm. This was a precaution to ensure that the arm had been properly anchored to the main body, as the tightening knobs for this are a little on the small side.

Like everything else in the workshop, the more you use a product the more familiar you become with it. With this guide, expertise is soon gained, and with this proficiency there is a realisation just what an excellent product this is. Trend have even built into the base provision for making any tiny adjustments which might be required to ensure the arm is at exactly 90° to the main body. **GW**



Note the positions of the three cramps when making a jigsaw cut at an angle



£43.96

This set of three bench chisels is the latest addition to Veritas's miniature tool range and is made in Canada

Veritas miniature chisels

well-shaped handles are made in bubinga, and match the rest of the Veritas range.

Out of the box

The tools are ready to use and can be easily honed on an oilstone, diamond stone, ceramic stone or whetstone to keep their edge. A casual observer may think this is a novelty set, but they would be wrong. The blades are very well finished, as are the stainless steel machined ferrules and the wooden handles; the overall result is a top-quality Veritas product. The chisels are presented in a fitted box good enough to house a piece of jewellery!

These tools will be of most interest to model makers and woodworkers making things such as musical instruments and boxes, because they can be manoeuvred in tight spaces. They're a bit of a luxury, but would make a great gift for the woodworker who has everything! **IW**

These miniature chisels are a third of the size of their big brothers. The blades are manufactured from PM-V11 steel, hardened to Rc61-63 and ground flat on the face. The steel has a very fine microstructure which makes it extremely durable so it can withstand heavy impact without chipping or deforming. It is also highly wear-resistant and the edge should last twice as long as normal A2 steel. However this steel does make the tools very expensive. The



These three firmer-style chisels look well cut out for some hard work



It's only when they're held in the hand that their actual scale is clearly revealed



Their small size means they're ideal for makers of models and little boxes

SPECIFICATION

BLADE WIDTHS	1/8, 1/4in and 3/8in (3.2, 6.35 & 9mm)
BLADE THICKNESS	3/32in (2.4mm)
BLADE BEVEL	25°
TOOL LENGTH	3 1/4in (80mm)

VERDICT

These little chisels are extremely well made and a delight to use.

PROS ■ Beautifully made
■ Long-lasting edge
■ Presentation case

CONS ■ Only the price!

VALUE FOR MONEY ■■■■■■■■
PERFORMANCE ■■■■■■■■

FURTHER INFORMATION

■ Brimarc
■ 03332 406967
■ www.brimarc.com

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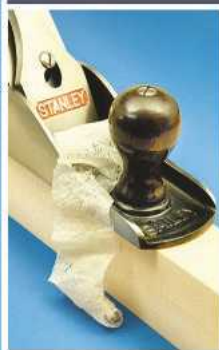
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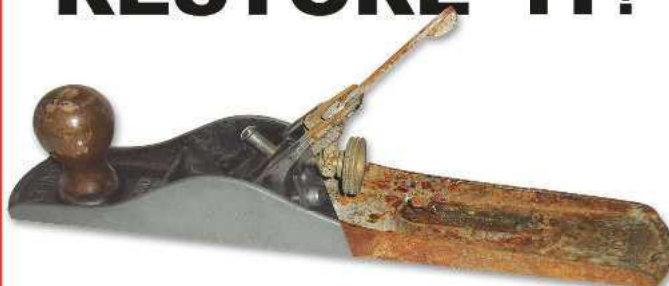
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IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUSTICE (CHANCERY DIVISION)
COMPANIES COURT No. 4486 of 2015

IN THE MATTER OF
EXCESS INSURANCE COMPANY LIMITED
HARTFORD FIRE INSURANCE COMPANY, UK BRANCH
AVIVA INSURANCE LIMITED
HARTFORD FINANCIAL PRODUCTS
INTERNATIONAL LIMITED
AND
IN THE MATTER OF
THE FINANCIAL SERVICES AND MARKETS ACT 2000
NOTICE

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that on 30 June 2015 Excess Insurance Company Limited ("Excess"), Hartford Fire Insurance Company, UK branch ("Hart Re") and Aviva Insurance Limited ("AIL") (Excess, Hart Re and AIL, together, the "Transferees") and Hartford Financial Products International Limited ("HFPI") or the "Transferee" made an application (the "Application") to the High Court of Justice (the "Court") pursuant to section 107(1) of the Financial Services and Markets Act 2000 ("FSMA") for an Order:

(1) under section 111 of FSMA sanctioning an insurance business transfer scheme for the transfer of certain general insurance business of the Transferees, as outlined below to HFPI (the "Scheme"); and
(2) making ancillary provisions in connection with the Scheme pursuant to section 112 of FSMA.

The Scheme will result in the following business being carried on by HFPI:

(a) the general insurance business carried on by Excess and Hart Re; and

(b) the business assumed by AIL from London & Edinburgh Insurance Company Limited (formerly London & Edinburgh General Insurance Company Limited) ("L&E") (now part of AIL), being:

(i) business written by L&E in pooling arrangements through the following underwriting agents:
(A) B. D. Cooke and Partners between 1948 and 1968;

(B) H.S. Weavers (Underwriting) Agencies Limited between 1972 and 1976;

(C) Tower Underwriting Management (also known as "Old Tower") between 1967 and 1972;

(D) Highlands Underwriting Agents (also known as "Tower X") between 1973 and 1978; and
(E) Westminster Marine Insurance Managers between 1960 and 1977; and

(ii) business written by L&E in the London market in its own name before 1 January 1992, which generally relates to direct US and reinsurance business written from the 1940's to the 1970's, together, (the "L&E Business").

Copies of the Scheme, a report on the terms of the Scheme prepared pursuant to section 109 of FSMA (the "Independent Expert's Report") and a statement setting out the terms of the Scheme and a summary of the Independent Expert's Report are available free of charge at www.downlandsliaability.com. Supporting documents and any further news about the Scheme will be posted on this website so you may wish to check for updates. You can also request free copies of any of these documents by writing to or telephoning Downlands Liability Management Limited ("DLM") using the details set out below.

The Application will be heard on 13 October 2015 by a Judge of the Chancery Division of the High Court at The Rolls Building, Fetter Lane, London, EC4A 3NL, United Kingdom. If approved by the Court, it is currently proposed that the Scheme will take effect on 15 October 2015.

Any person who believes that he or she would be adversely affected by the carrying out of the Scheme is entitled to either make written representations or be heard (either in person or by a legal representative) at the hearing of the Application on 13 October 2015. Any person who intends to appear at the Court or make representations in writing is requested to notify his or her objections as soon as possible and ideally at least two business days before the hearing of the Application on 13 October 2015 to the solicitors named below or to DLM using the details set out below.

If the Scheme is sanctioned by the Court, it will result in the transfer to HFPI of all the contracts, property, assets and liabilities relating to the general insurance business of Excess and Hart Re and relating to the L&E Business (as defined above); notwithstanding that a person would otherwise be entitled to terminate, modify, acquire or claim an interest or right or to treat an interest or right as terminated or modified in respect thereof. Any such right will only be enforceable to the extent the Order of the Court makes provision to that effect.

Dated: 7 August 2015

Freshfields Bruckhaus Deringer LLP
65 Fleet Street
London
EC4Y 1HS

United Kingdom

Ref: 138865-0034/GHFS/NAG/LEH

Solicitors for the Transferees and the Transferee

Downlands Liability Management Limited

DLM House

Downlands Business Park

Lyons Way

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West Sussex

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You can write to us at *The Woodworker*, MyTime Media Ltd, Enterprise House, Enterprise Way, Edenbridge, Kent, TN8 6HF or send an email to mark.cass@mytimemedia.com



STILL ROCKING

Hi Mark

Here's a picture of the rocking horse I've just made for our first grandchild. She's called Seren Grace – an unusual name, so I've stencilled it on the seat. It's my first serious attempt at woodworking since I made a stool in woodwork class at school, 54 years ago. It's still going strong!

The plans were from The Rocking Horse Shop in Fangfoss, as advertised in your magazine. They're a very helpful bunch of people.

Barry Mort, South Wales

Thanks for this, Barry. You must be pleased that it turned out so well; it's a great effort for someone resuming after a 50-year break. I hope you'll be doing some more, but I wouldn't leave it quite so long this time!

mark

CUTTING EDGE

Dear Mark,

Although I enjoyed Robin Gates' article in the August issue of the magazine, I can't help thinking he gave himself a lot of unnecessary work in making scrapers from old saws. Many years ago I bought the real thing, and found it pretty useless; perhaps it was my technique! Then a joiner friend suggested using scrap glass. I tried this and have never used anything else since.

A piece measuring about 3 x 1½in gives eight cutting edges. This size is big enough to give you a good grip, and anything larger is more liable to break. Some work better than others, and they don't last as long as a metal scraper, but who cares! A 2ft square of horticultural glass (cheaper than float) will yield 128 pieces of the suggested size. That's over 1,000 cutting edges, which ought to be enough for most jobs.

For anyone who has never done it, it takes about ten minutes to learn how to cut glass. A flat board covered with an old blanket or several layers of newspaper, a wooden straightedge (preferably a set square to minimise the chance of slipping) and a single wheel glass cutter are all you need.

Heavy pressure on the cutter isn't necessary. You'll hear a faint hissing sound as you run the cutter across the glass against the straightedge. Keep going: you *must* create an unbroken score line right across the piece. Then place the straightedge underneath the score line, press gently on each side and the glass will break cleanly.

Graham, by email

Good to hear from you, Graham. Although Robin may have given himself a fair bit of work with the scrapers, the satisfaction of making one's own tools must surely outweigh the effort expended.

I know what you mean about glass scrapers. I've used them over the years when there's been nothing else to hand, and have been pleased with the results. I do have a bit of a fear of glass though, and nowadays I restrict its use in my 'shop to acting as a flat base for abrasive sheets as part of my sharpening system.

As for cutting glass, now there's a very satisfying activity, especially when it comes off clean! I never tire of watching the glaziers at work when I'm buying panes for windows I've just made.

Mark

FINDING TIMBER

Hello Mark

Mike Matthews wrote to you last month about the difficulty in finding good timber in East Kent. He could try Stiles and Bates of Upper Farm, Church Hill, Sutton, Dover CT15 5DF (01304 366360, sales@stilesandbates.co.uk). I'm always tempted to buy wood from them when I'm on holiday in Deal. He might need to pre-order specific sizes, though. I hope this helps.

Gordon Cookson, by email

Thanks for that, Gordon. I seem to recall seeing a directory of UK timber merchants not too long ago. If I get a spare moment I'll try to track it down for the benefit of us all.

Mark

Here at *The Woodworker* we're always pleased to see photos of your work, and we know everyone else is as well! So send them in now and see if you can make the cut.

Home entertainment heads into the future

A project for making an attractive case or housing for the home entertainment system has long been a staple of our favourite woodworking magazine since the start of the 20th century

Radios and extension speakers frequently needed decorative cases, and a few brave souls have even made their own musical instruments. Whilst rummaging through the magazine archives I've seen all manner of projects from harpsichords to ukuleles, and there can be few things more satisfying than entertaining friends and family with a tune or two played on your own musical creation.

The audio revolution

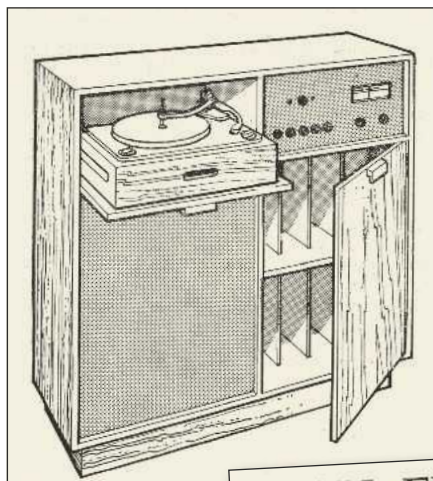
This particular project from *The Woodworker* of July 1960 really ushers in a new era in home audio. The name High Fidelity would soon be shortened to the ubiquitous abbreviation 'hi-fi', a term which remained in common parlance amongst audiophiles for decades afterwards and still has currency amongst quite a large percentage of the population – vinyl enthusiasts all.

Skipping tracks

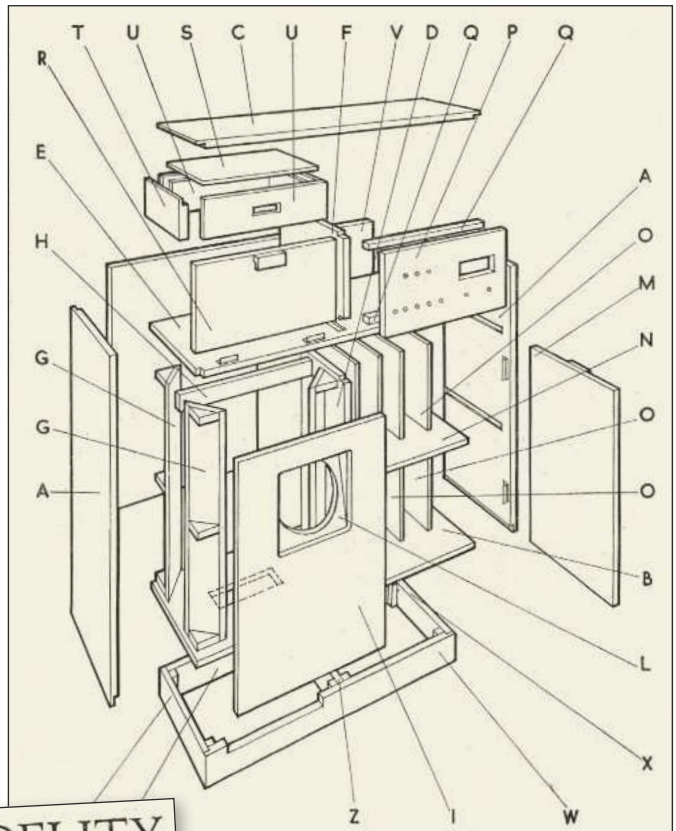
Looking at the plans now, and with the benefit of a wider experience in matters pertaining to the playing of records, it's clear that, while the unit is attractive in a functional 1960s way, it does for me have one glaring weak point.

I'm referring of course to the pull-out turntable drawer (or transcription unit/record changer as it's referred to in the text). Unless constructed to an almost impossibly high level of super robustness, the danger of nudges and wobbles inducing track skipping must surely have been too high to endure.

I like to think that one or two makers would have adapted the plans – taken from the book *Practical Designs for Built-In Furniture*



HIGH FIDELITY
UNIT



by Arthur Brown (currently available on eBay) – and placed the transcription unit on the solid top of the unit instead of on the drawer, possibly covering it with a lid made of that new and wonderful transparent plastic material, Perspex.

No stereo

Also worth noting is the provision for just the single speaker (and a disappointingly small one at that), stereophonic sound having yet to be made widely available. My favourite part though is the control panel at the top right. This – cloth-covered to match the speaker box – is bored and pierced to accommodate the maker's chosen amplifier, in this case the Osram 912 Plus.

With record storage space included underneath, it really makes for a terrific period piece of furniture. I'm only sorry there's not a photo of it with a few beatnik types lounging around enjoying the latest cool jazz sounds to really give us the full picture!

mark

More from *The Woodworker* archive next month...

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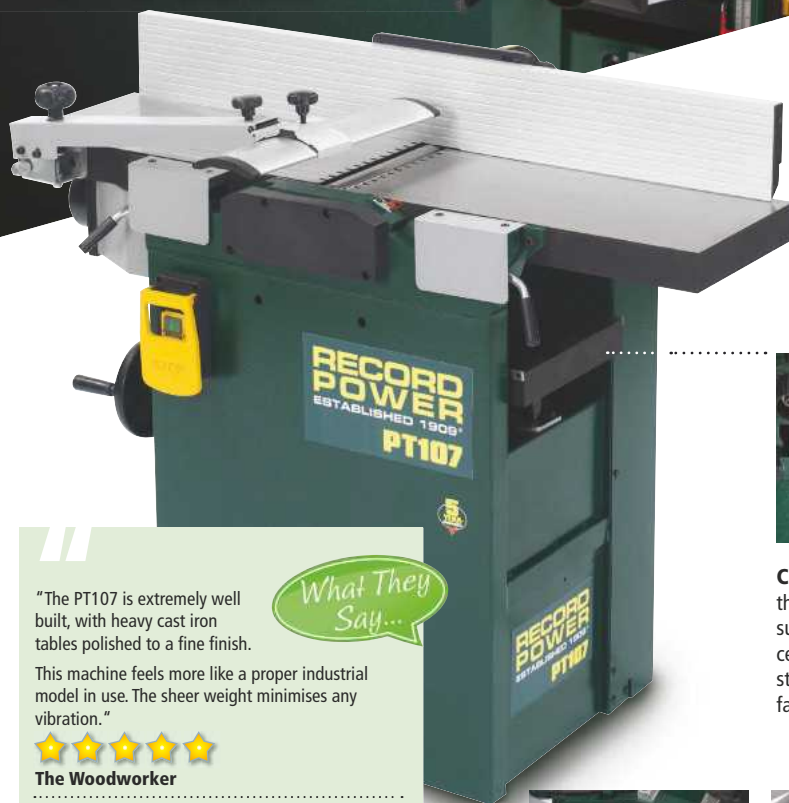
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